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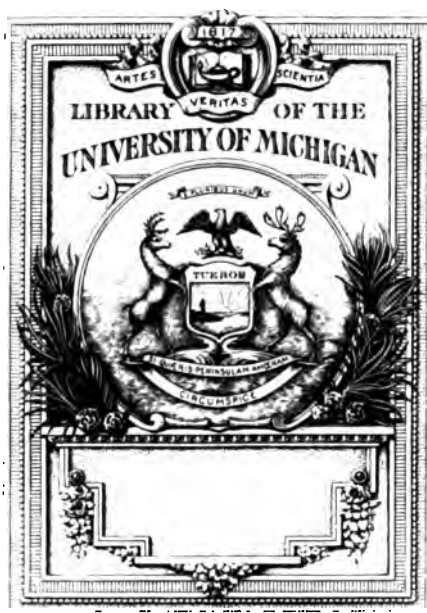
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NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI
AND HIS TIMES.

BY
PROF. PASQUALE VILLARI.
AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF SAVONAROLA," ETC.

TRANSLATED BY LINDA VILLARI.

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AND STUDY DOWN TO HIS DEATH.

(1513-1527.)

(*Continued.*)



CHAPTER V.

Leo X., his Court and his Policy.

BEFORE continuing our examination of Machiavelli's works, it is necessary to revert to the history of his times, with which they are so closely connected. The accession of Leo X. to the Papal throne had been welcomed with the highest hopes, and particularly in Italy. The world was weary of the scandalous excesses of Alexander VI. and of the restless daring of Julius II. It yearned for a little rest and peace ; therefore Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici seemed to be the Pope desired by all. It was said of him by Vettori that "he had played his part so well, as to be deemed a man of excellent conduct."* It is certain that he had a fair general reputation ; but he was also known to be very shrewd and adroit in the guidance and management of men. In politics he belonged to the school of his father, Lorenzo the Magnificent, for while very ambitious of power for himself and his family, he veiled his craving beneath a great show of kindness and simplicity, and always adopted what in Florentine

* *Sommario della Storia d'Italia*, in the *Archivio Storico*, Appendix, No. 22, page 297.

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phrase were called civil methods. Nevertheless, he was quite able, on emergency, not only to lie and cheat, and almost take pride in so doing, but even to stain his hands with blood. He had a great and well deserved reputation for liberality with his purse. In fact, he was not only lavish of that which he had, but of that which he had not. "It was no more possible," Vettori tells us, "for His Holiness to keep a thousand ducats, than for a stone to fly upwards of itself." * "If the doors of the Pantheon were made of gold, the Pope would never be able to leave them untouched," † said one of the Venetian ambassadors. And it was added by another, that besides his inability to keep account of money, the crowd of Florentines about him claiming to be relations, stripped him of every soldo; and for this reason were greatly hated at Court. ‡ Nor less considerable was his reputation as a great Mæcenæ, a patron and cultivator of letters and all the fine arts. The palace at St. Eustachio, § his residence while a Cardinal, speedily became a pleasant resort for artists and literati. It was also a museum, and served for the reception of the Medicean library, purchased by the Cardinal in 1508 from the friars of St. Mark, by whom it had been acquired in Savonarola's time. ||

* Vettori, *Sommario*, p. 322.

† Albéri, *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti*, Series 2, vol. iii. ; *Relazione* by Marin Giorgi, p. 56.

‡ Albéri, *Relazioni*, etc., vol. cit. ; *Relazione*, by Marco Minio, p. 63.

§ Afterwards known as the Palazzo Madama, from having been inhabited by Caterina de' Medici, before she went to France. It is now occupied by the Italian Senate.

|| It was afterwards re-transferred to Florence.

Leo X. was of middle height, with a large head, a reddish complexion, and projecting eyes; he was so shortsighted that he was always obliged to use glasses, was extremely proud of his beautiful hands, which he never forgot to exhibit, and prouder still of his voice, which was as musical in speech as in song. He suffered much from a disease that made it unpleasant to approach him; he was very corpulent, and unable to support any prolonged fatigue. All the courtier poets were loud in their praise of his Latin verses, which were very poor stuff, although improvised with much facility; he won general applause and admiration by his singing, his discussions on painting, sculpture and music and his conversation on all subjects. But in reality he never succeeded in producing anything original. He was an accomplished dilettante, a great lover of art and literature, but he was nothing more. And in this he clearly showed his inferiority to his father, who undoubtedly left an individual impress on the literature of his day.

Before the Conclave that had elected him was dissolved, the Pope had already made choice of his two secretaries. These were, the Venetian, Pietro Bembo, a learned Latinist, an elegant Italian writer, a lover of the fair sex and a gay liver, and Giovanni Sadoletto, another erudite Latinist, a wit and a lover of pleasure and brilliant society. And the prelates that the Pope collected around him were all more or less of the same stamp. A prominent place was for some time held among them by Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena, the noted author of that scandalous comedy, *La Calandria*. But although a scape-



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grace, he was nevertheless well versed in public affairs, had been very useful in promoting the Pope's election, and was speedily recompensed by a Cardinal's hat. His enjoyment of it was brief; his health was already undermined, soon the suspicion of his having intrigued with France threw him out of favour, and when his death took place after a short time, he was said to have died by poison.

Leo X. was only happy when surrounded by these prelates, by his poets and his artists; and he revealed his true nature and expressed his genuine sentiments when, on meeting his brother Giuliano, shortly after his election, he said to him: "Let us enjoy the papacy, since God has given it to us." * To enjoy life, less sensually than æsthetically, was the chief aim of his desires. "He wants neither wars nor troubles," wrote the Venetian Ambassador Marin Giorgi.† "He thought of everything excepting war," ‡ wrote the Florentine Ambassador, Francesco Vettori. Yet while sacrificing everything to his beloved pleasures, and therefore really desirous of peace, he was always at war, and kept the whole of Italy in continual agitation.

For being always in need of large funds for his Court, his pleasures and entertainments, his literati and artists and even for his buffoons, he tried to obtain supplies in many different ways, and these ways often gave rise to dissensions that ended in warfare. Thus he speedily cast a longing eye on the territories of Cervia

* Albéri, *Relazione* of Marin Giorgi, p. 52.

† Albéri, *Relazione* of Marin Giorgi, p. 51. ‡ Vettori, *Sommario*, p. 322.

and Ravenna, yielding a yearly revenue of fifty thousand ducats from salt, and thereby aroused the suspicions of the Venetians to whom they belonged.* Besides he had an ardent desire for celebrity, longed to be regarded as a power in Italy, and above all had a keen and unrelenting resolve to aggrandize the whole of his family. "The Pope and his Medici," wrote the Venetian Ambassador, "have no other thought than of increasing the fortunes of their house ; and his nephews, not satisfied with dukedoms, pretend that one of them ought to be a king." †

We have already related how these desires constantly tended towards the projected foundation of a North Italian State, to consist of Modena and Parma, and be afterwards extended to Ferrara and Urbino, the which plan naturally led to conflict with the Este and the Della Rovere. And, as we have seen, it was this project that had suggested to Machiavelli the idea of the *Prince*, in which he counselled the Medici to extend their rule over the whole of Italy, and to unite it and organize its forces. Nevertheless, the Pope's original intention had been to bestow the new kingdom upon his nephew Lorenzo, and on the supposition of being able to take advantage of the inevitable confusion in Italy, to seize the Neapolitan State for his brother Giuliano. Soon discovering the impossibility of carrying out this second and more daring design, he determined to give Modena and Parma to

* Albéri, *Relazione* (already cited), p. 51.

† Albéri, *Relazione*, quoted above, p. 45. Marin Giorgi wrote this Report in 1517.

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Giuliano. But this brother, a man of fantastic and honest disposition, died in 1516, and thus there only remained Lorenzo, aged twenty-one years, and who, according to the Venetian Ambassador, "was of a bold temperament, shrewd, and fitted for great deeds, and if not equal to Valentino's very little behind him." * Lorenzo continually spurred on the Pope, and all the more because he was by no means content to remain in Florence, where his authority was rather nominal than real.

There was also another Medici of maturer years and greater influence, Giulio (1478-1534), natural son of the Giuliano murdered in the conspiracy of the Pazzi. This Giulio, born shortly after his father's death, and afterwards very notorious in the world as Pope Clement VII., had early adopted the ecclesiastical career, was Knight of Rhodes, an assiduous courtier to Cardinal Giovanni, and increasingly assiduous after the latter became Pope Leo X. He had played a very active part in the plot that drove Soderini from Florence, and was shortly after nominated Archbishop of that city. Nor did much time pass before he was raised to the purple, after a false preliminary declaration of his legitimacy, managed in the same manner practised by Alexander VI. on Cæsar Borgia's behalf. Hats were conferred at the same time upon Bernardo da Bibbiena, the Datary Lorenzo Pucci, and Innocenzo Cibo, the son of the Pope's sister. And this was Leo X.'s first step in the violation of his oaths, the first thing to bring about a change in

* Albéri, *Relazione*, above quoted, by Giorgi, pp. 51, 52.

the good opinion formerly conceived of him. Cardinal Giulio was employed in all affairs of importance, and held to be a man of great sagacity, and not merely adviser but almost leader to the Pope.* For being much less devoted to pleasure, less desirous of playing the Maecenas, he was able to work hard and did not allow himself to be distracted from business. But in truth the Pope only turned him to account as a useful and docile instrument of his own will. To avoid fatigue he always made great use of others ; but always wished things to be done in his own way, and to carry out his own ends, without any regard for the means.

It was his misfortune to have mounted the pontifical throne at a moment when Europe was racked by the bloody contests and rivalries of divers great potentates ; at a moment when the first stirrings of religious reform were beginning to be felt ; when Italy was a prey to the French and Spaniards contending for mastery over her, and alternately summoning other foreigners to their assistance. The aim of Leo X. was to become supreme arbiter of the general policy of Europe. The authority of the Church, the family prestige, the great good fortune that had so far attended him, certainly placed him in a very lofty position, and caused many to hope that, as his father had been styled the balancing needle of Italy, so he might be arbiter in the great political struggles of Europe. To effect this end, however, his conduct should have been constantly governed by some noble aim and

* Albéri, the above quoted *Relazioni*: Giorgi's, p. 52, and Marco Minio's, p. 65.

genuine political creed. Instead, he nearly always allowed himself to be ruled by purely personal and often unworthy aims.

Indifferent to religion, it was impossible for him to form the most distant idea of the real nature of the Reformation; ambitious in politics, he only sought to increase his revenues, his State, and the power of his house. To these ends he sacrificed everything, making and unmaking alliances, frankly declaring it to be a maxim of the true statesman never to remain faithful to a single alliance, but instantly to conclude another with some prince hostile to the first, in order to be prepared for every contingency.* Thus, his policy was a succession of continual, interminable changes, a labyrinth impenetrable to all who cannot discern that its sole clue consists in the personal interests of the Pope and his irresistible craving for the aggrandizement of his kindred.

It is easy to conceive the fatal results brought upon Italy by the policy of a man like this. No sooner was Julius II. dead, than General Cardona seized on Parma and Piacenza in behalf of the Duchy of Milan. The lord of that State, Massimiliano Sforza, held little more than a nominal authority, and being a weak and inexperienced youth, was a puppet in the hands of Swiss, Spaniards, and Emperor, to the extreme vexation of his Secretary, Girolamo Morone, who was on the contrary a man of wide capacity, restless and audacious temper, and

* Albéri, *Relazioni*, series 2nd, vol. iii. *Relazione* of Antonio Soriano, p. 290.

always bent upon daring designs. The Pope, being cruelly hurt by the loss of the two cities, upon which he had so firmly counted for his kinsmen, immediately began to weave fresh intrigues. Invited to ally himself with France, who in March, 1515, had leagued with Venice for the attack of Milan, he refused consent, because the restoration of Parma and Piacenza was not guaranteed to him.* On the other hand he feigned an inclination to join the league arranged in April, at Mechlin, between Henry VIII. and the Emperor, for the defence of Milan and the States of the Church, and for the attack upon France. Meanwhile, Girolamo Morone had hastened to Rome to obtain supplies for his lord's defence, and the Pope, without as yet coming to any decision, gave him funds for the hire of Swiss troops. War broke out immediately. The French poured in on one side, the Venetians advanced on another, and Milan rose in revolt against the Duke, who, with only Como and Novara left in his possession, shut himself up in the latter city. Then, however, the Swiss poured down from their mountain passes, signally defeated the French at Riotta in the month of June, and thus brought about a change in the face of affairs. Cardona, in fact, as the representative of Spain, was the first to join the league of Mechlin, and handed over Parma and Piacenza to the Pope, who then naturally gave in his adhesion also. The Spaniards instantly hurried to attack the Venetians, and approached very near to the lagoons. In October, at Motta, he gave

* Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom.*, vol. viii. p. 23; De Leva, *Storia di Carlo V.*, vol. i. p. 163.

battle to Alviano, who had been set at liberty by the French, and routed his army. At the same time France lost Genoa, was assailed at home by the English and Imperial forces, and defeated by them at Guinegate (16th August, 1513). The Swiss also marched into France on the Dijon side ; but La Trémoille, by means of gold and golden promises, succeeded in inducing them to retire from Milan.

Now at last Louis XII. discovered that it would be to his interest to join with the Pope, who had the power of raising up so many enemies against him. He therefore renounced the *Conciliabolo*, already commenced at Pisa, and subjected the Gallican Church to the authority of the Lateran Council. In this manner a new treaty was speedily concluded between the Pope, France and England. Leo X., therefore, now found himself allied with the French, who had been constantly adverse to his house ; indeed, it was exactly at that moment that he entered into relationship with King Louis II. by the marriage of Philiberte of Savoy with Giuliano de' Medici, and promised to send the latter to aid in the retaking of Milan. Meanwhile, he was already secretly engaged in negotiating an agreement between the Empire, Spain, Venice, Florence, and Milan, in order, after his usual fashion, to keep the road open for turning this way or that, as circumstances might require. "Full of devices," so wrote Guicciardini,* "for while on the one hand he had no wish that the King of France

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. vi. p. 31 ; De Leva, *Storia di Carlo V.*, vol. i. p. 175 and fol.

should recover the Milanese State, on the other he tried to conciliate him and the other potentates as much as possible, by divers tricks." Hence it is impossible to keep pace with his innumerable tergiversations. He made treaties with all and was faithful to none, because none would give him the promises and guarantees that he required for his designs on the Neapolitan kingdom and Upper Italy. Yet all were cognisant of these ambitious schemes of his.* When it was seen that the Pope permitted the Florentines to attack the Lucchese ; when it was seen that instead of giving up Reggio, according to his sworn promise, he purchased Modena from the Emperor for 44,000 ducats ; all understood the nature of his designs in that quarter. Siena, Ferrara, Urbino, dreaded that at any moment they might find themselves caught in the meshes of the Holy Father's intrigues, and he was naturally the object of universal mistrust.

But now the direction of European affairs was changed by a novel event. On the death of his wife Anne, Louis XII. had espoused the Princess Mary, sister of King Henry VIII., and she was so young and beautiful that ill-natured tongues said that King Louis had brought from England a "hackney of so swift a pace that in a few months it carried him out of the world."* In fact, being of a sickly habit, and fifty-three years of age, whereas his wife was only sixteen, his strength was unequal to the weight of his new happiness, and he expired on the first day of the year 1515.

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, pp. 20-31. † Vettori, *Sommario*, p. 303.

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His successor, Francis I., was only twenty years of age, was enthusiastic for the memory of Gaston de Foix, and burning to avenge the defeats of Novara and Guinegate. During the past year he had taken to wife the eldest daughter of King Louis, heiress through her mother to the Duchy of Brittany, and inheriting her father's pretended claims on that of Milan. He was of lofty stature, handsome and robust, of chivalric, pleasure-loving temperament, literary tastes, and a mind alike capable of the conception and execution of daring designs. And together with the French crown he also assumed the title of Duke of Milan, and made preparations for an Italian campaign. To this end he formed an alliance with the Archduke Charles, renewed the treaty with England, and ratified that already made by Louis XII. with Venice.* But it was not possible for him to come to terms with the Pope, inasmuch as the Nuncio Canossa, bishop of Tricarico, an energetic and ready-witted man, not only urged the usual demand for Modena and Parma, but even claimed a promise of the kingdom of Naples. Francis I. almost lost patience at so exorbitant a request. "His Holiness claims too much," he replied, "and hard would it be for us to grant it, without grievous burdens upon ourselves and the crown. Neither he nor his brother Giuliano would be strong enough to rule and order so vast and so unquiet a realm that has never long remained subject to one and the same master."†

* De Lea, *Storia di Carlo V.*, vol. i. chap. vi. ; Mignet, *Rivalité de François I. et de Charles-Quint* (Paris, Didier, 1875), vol. i. chap. i.

† Vide *Documenti riguardanti Giuliano dei Medici e il Pontefice Leone X.*, in the *Archivio Storico*, Appendix 8, pp. 310-15.

Without losing time the king assembled a powerful army between the Saône, the Rhone and the Alps, and at last moved towards Italy with 60,000 foot soldiers, 30,000 cavalry, and 72 pieces of artillery. There were the celebrated French men-at-arms, consisting of the highest nobles of the land, and led by the monarch in person. There were many Lansquenets, and many Gascons, and these latter were commanded by Navarro, who had deserted from Spain.* Meanwhile, on the 17th July, an armed confederation had been formed by the Emperor, the Catholic king, Sforza, and the Pope, "for the defence and deliverance of Italy." In order to obtain the adhesion of the Pope it had actually been necessary to yield him Parma and Piacenza, and promise to recompense their owner, Sforza, with other lands in exchange. Raymond of Cardona was already at the head of eight or ten thousand Spaniards; the Swiss were marching over the Alpine passes in very large numbers. They had been enrolled by Maximilian Sforza and the Pope, who had engaged to pay them and provide them with an efficient force of cavalry, already organized under the command of Prospero Colonna. Besides this, the Pope had furnished an army of Florentine and pontifical troops, commanded in the first instance by Giuliano, and then when he was invalided, by Lorenzo de' Medici, with the title of Captain of the Pope and the Florentines. But there was a rumour, soon to be verified, that these had orders not to fight

* De Leva, *Storia di Carlo V.*, vol. i. p. 207; Mignet, *Rivalité, etc.*, vol. i. p. 64.

against France in earnest, but only to manœuvre so as to obtain the best possible terms for the Pope from the winning side; and this, as was natural, proved very injurious to the conduct of the war.*

On the 13th September, 1515, the two armies met in pitched battle at Marignano. The Swiss, in three divisions of eight or ten thousand men each, made a vigorous and successful attack upon the French men-at-arms, and were preparing as usual to hurl themselves on the artillery, when Francis I. charged at the head of his guard, and carrying on the struggle far into the night, the fate of the day was left undecided. He then ordered Alviano to advance with his Venetians; despatched messages to others of his generals, and having rested for a few hours leaning against a cannon, renewed the fight at dawn. The battle raged fiercely, and seemed to be turning in favour of the Swiss, when the arrival of Alviano, and his onslaught to the cry of "*Viva San Marco*," compelled them to give way. They made one last and desperate effort and then beat a retreat, leaving from seven

* "And it is said that this army is not there to oppose France, but to 'obtain better terms.' Marin Sanuto, as quoted in De Leva's *Storia*, etc., vol. i. p. 208, note. *Vide* also Capponi's *Storia della Repubblica di Firenze*, vol. ii. p. 319 and fol.; Francesco Vettori, *Sommario*, p. 308.

At this juncture the Doge of Genoa, Ottaviano Fregoso, although very friendly with the Pope, who had been his benefactor, made secret terms with France, first deceiving the Pope and then sending him a lengthy letter, saying that it would have been very difficult for him to justify himself in addressing private individuals or princes who should measure matters of State by private considerations; but that it was positively superfluous to offer excuses in writing to so wise a prince, who, better than all others, would know how much was lawful for the salvation or even aggrandizement of the State. Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. vi. p. 57.

to eight thousand dead on the field. And this fight, termed by the war-experienced Trivulzio, "the battle of the giants," entirely destroyed the prestige so long enjoyed by the Swiss, who were never again held to be invincible, as in former times. Nevertheless, they executed their retreat operations in admirable order; left several thousand men in the fortress of Milan, and went back to their mountains threatening to return to take revenge at some future opportunity.

Francis I., who had made Bayard knight him on the battle field, now entered Milan and levied a fine of 300,000 ducats. Soon after the citadel surrendered in opposition to the advice of Morone, who effected his escape from the hands of the French.* Maximilian Sforza, tired of the Swiss and his own bad luck, gave himself up to the king, and withdrawing to France, enjoyed his pension of 36,000 ducats without further troubling himself about anything else. Cardona, disgusted with Pope and Florentines, whose forces had always shilly-shallied, and failed him at every emergency, marched towards Naples. The King halted at Pavia, intending to move thence to take possession of Parma and Piacenza and then push on still further. The news of these events naturally caused the greatest alarm to the Pope, who beheld himself forsaken by his friends and at the mercy of his enemies. The first day's fight at Marignano, and the news of the successes achieved by the Swiss, were swelled on the way to Rome into an announcement of the total defeat of the French and Venetians. Cardinal

* De Lea, *Storia di Carlo V.*, vol. i. p. 214.

Bibbiena had immediately caused the city to be illuminated, and the Pope determined to tell the great news with his own lips to the Venetian Ambassador, Marin Giorgi. But the following day the latter received dispatches from the Signoria announcing the victory, and accordingly arrayed himself in festive attire, hastened to the Vatican and caused the Pope to be awakened. And when Leo appeared, much bewildered and only half dressed, the Orator said to him :—

“Holy Father, yesterday Your Holiness gave me evil “and false intelligence, to day I can give you the good “and authentic news that the Swiss have been routed.” And so saying he handed him the dispatch of the Signoria, on reading which, the Pope exclaimed in consternation : “*Quid ergo erit de nobis, et quid de vobis ?* It “will go well with us,” replied the Orator, “for we are with “the most Christian king, and your Holiness will suffer “no harm.” “We will place ourselves in the hands of the *Cristianissimo*, and crave his mercy,” * concluded the Pope, who even at that moment would not speak of yielding to the Venetian Signory.

Like a true statesman, Francis I. sought to consolidate his conquest before venturing upon new enterprises. Therefore, after seizing Brescia and some other territories, and attempting to take Verona, which however was defended by the Emperor Maximilian, he arranged a treaty with the Archduke Charles at Noyon (13th August, 1516), promising him the hand of his daughter, who by bringing with her dowry the French claims on the Neapolitan

* Albéri, *Vide* Giorgi's before quoted *Relatione*, pp. 44, 45.

kingdom, would put an end to all quarrels and wars in that cause. Meanwhile, the Catholic king—no other than the Archduke Charles, who by the decease of Ferdinand of Aragon (23rd January, 1516) had succeeded to the Spanish throne, and carried on the government with the aid of Cardinal Ximenes—was to pay 100,000 gold crowns every year until the marriage—necessarily delayed on account of the bride's tender age—could be consummated. Charles, the prime mover of these arrangements, persuaded Maximilian to sign a new treaty (Brussels, 3rd December, 1516) by which, on payment of 200,000 ducats, Verona was ceded to the Venetians, so that they and the French became masters of Upper Italy. A permanent alliance (Freiburg, 29th November, 1516) was concluded between Francis I. and the thirteen Swiss Cantons, to whom the King disbursed large sums of money. And finally, on the 11th March, 1517, the League of Cambrai was ratified, by which Charles, Maximilian and Francis I. mutually guaranteed their respective dominions. By this means the Archduke, already sovereign of Spain and the Low Countries, secured his dominion over Naples, and began to prepare the way for his enormous power in the future. But for the moment the world's eye was fixed upon Francis I., who after humiliating the Swiss, had succeeded in gaining their friendship; who had become lord of Milan, and had wrested Verona, the key of Tirol, from the hands of the fantastic and turbulent Emperor; who had obtained guarantees from Germany and Spain, for the integrity of his own States, and remained the ally of the Venetians.*

* Mignet, *Rivalité*, etc., vol. i. chap i.

Nevertheless, the result of all these labours would have been uncertain and precarious if the king had not succeeded in gaining over the Pope, who, if left in opposition, might have again stirred up enemies against him on all sides. Accordingly, negotiations were immediately set on foot, and it was decided that the King and the Pope should meet at Bologna to bring them to a conclusion. Leo X. came to Tuscany towards the end of November, 1515, and to allow time for the completion of the great preparations being made in Florence, for his state reception, he tarried a few days at the villa of the Gianfigliuzzi family at Marignolle. On the 30th of the month he entered the city by the San Pier Gattolini gate, of which the outer portion had to be demolished to allow space for the passage of the Pontiff and his numerous suite, comprising eighteen cardinals. He was lodged at Santa Maria Novella, removed the following day to the Medici palace, and started for Bologna on the 3rd December. It is recorded by the chroniclers that Florence employed two thousand workmen for more than a month, and spent over seventy thousand florins in the festivities given on this occasion.* The streets and squares through which the Pope was to pass, were plenteously decorated with triumphal arches, statues, obelisks and temples, all de-

* Among other accounts *vide* that in the Chronicle of Luca d' Antonio di Luca Landucci, a Florentine grocer, of which a manuscript copy is to be found in the Marucelliana library (Cod. 26). Signor Del Badia of the State Archives, is about to edit it, and has collated it with an autographic fragment at Siena. This Chronicle contains a minute description of these festivities, and also a good deal of information respecting Savonarola. This latter portion has, however, been already brought out in a separate pamphlet by Signor Fanfani.

signed by the best Italian artists, of whom many were at that time flourishing in Florence.* Some of these erections were copied from ancient monuments at Rome,† while others were original inventions. Antonio da San Gallo had built an octagonal temple on the Piazza della Signoria ; Baccio Bandinelli, a giant in the Loggia ; but the chief attraction to the public was the wooden façade added to the Cathedral. Its architectural portions, bas-reliefs and statues, were the work of Jacopo Sansovino, its paintings by Andrea del Sarto. The original idea had once before been suggested by Lorenzo the Magnificent. ‡

The Pope, after leaving Florence, made a state entry into Bologna on the 7th December, and the King arrived there on the 11th and stayed until the 15th. On the 22nd December, Leo X. returned to Florence and remained there for Christmas and the series of festivals given in Carnival, until the 19th of February, when he at last started for Rome.§

The meeting at Bologna led to the ratification of a treaty that had been already drawn up on the 13th

* Vasari, *Vite*, etc., Le Monnier edition (Life of Andrea del Sarto), vol. viii. p. 267.

† "Erant varix structuræ similes illis quæ videntur in Urbe Roma, videlicet obeliscus sicut in Vaticano, columna sicut in Campo Martio, et huiusmodi usque ad Sanctam Mariam Novellam." *Diario* of Paride De Grassis. Roscoe published this and other fragments of the *Diario* in his *Life of Leo X.*

‡ Vasari, *op. cit.* vol. viii. p. 267.

§ It has been repeatedly asserted that in the course of these Florentine festivities Machiavelli's *Mandragola* was played before the Pope. But there is no mention of any such performance in the contemporary chronicles, and as we shall presently show, there are documents disproving the assertion.



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October, 1515. The Pope not only repudiated his previous arrangement with the Emperor, but, with far greater violence to his feelings, had to restore Parma and Piacenza to the king, and promise the restitution of Modena and Reggio to the Duke of Ferrara, who, on his part, was to return him the sum already disbursed to the Emperor. Francis I. promised, in his turn, to defend Florence and the States of the Church, and to bestow on the brother and nephew of the Pope certain dignities and revenues in France. The Pragmatic Sanction was abrogated by a treaty that increased the subordination of the Gallican Church to the monarch and the Pope.*

On this occasion Francis I. had two more requests to make to the Pope. He begged the gift of the Laocoon group, recently discovered in Rome, and already famous throughout the civilized world. Leo X., who, to use the expression of a modern writer, would have more willingly yielded the head of one of the Apostles, consented to part with the group, privately determining to substitute a copy for the original. Indeed, he commissioned Baccio Bandinelli to make one, but not even this replica ever found its way to France.† The king's second request was for the pardon of Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, who, after having taken pay from the Pope, had come to an understanding with France during the war. But on this point Leo X. was inflexible. He had lost all hope of Naples ; he had been compelled to yield Parma

* Mignet, *Rivalité*, etc., pp. 103, 104 ; Gregorovius, *Geschichte*, etc., vol. viii. p. 192.

† Gregorovius, *op. cit.*, vol. viii. p. 191.

and Piacenza, to promise to yield Modena and Reggio ; he was resolved to be able to count on Urbino for his kinsmen, and he hated the Duke. Therefore his reply was, that he reserved the right of punishing his own subjects according to the nature of their crimes. And the king did not press the matter further.*

Although just escaped from imminent danger, the Pope was by no means satisfied. He detested France, was burning with a sense of humiliation, and already trying by underhand means to reconcile Maximilian with the Venetians, in order to pave the way for fresh intrigues and fresh breaches of faith. Instead of fulfilling his agreement to cede Modena to the Duke of Ferrara, who was ready to pay for it, he gave him nothing but words. Meanwhile he was preparing for the campaign on Urbino, which was to be conducted by Lorenzo. The latter was disposed to hesitate, for he recognized the difficulty of the task, but was spurred on by his own ambition, that of his mother Alfonsina, and the impetuosity of the Pope, who protested that he must uphold the honour of the Church against the Duke. If this man, he added, were allowed to escape punishment, every petty Baron in the State would rise in rebellion.† He therefore proclaimed the poor Duke guilty of felony. Lorenzo set out at the head of a small army ; was speedily master of the Duchy, and received investiture from the Pope. But very soon the dispossessed lord, being seconded by Othon

* Mignet, *op. cit.*, vol. i. pp. 103, 104 ; Gregorovius, *op. cit.*, vol. viii. p. 192 ; Vettori, *Sommario*, etc., p. 315.

† Vettori, *Sommario*, p. 319.

de Foix, Seigneur of Lantrec, and Governor of Milan, who was highly enraged by the Pope's faithlessness, and with the efficacious aid of Federigo di Bozzolo, a daring captain of adventure, joined him in the command of large bands of mercenaries left without employment at the close of the last war, and regained possession of his own State amid the acclamations of his people. The Pope in his fury turned appealingly to his allies, but found them indifferent and distrustful. He then hired new captains of adventure, some in his own name, others in that of the Florentines, whom he thus compelled to share the expenses of an enterprise in which they had no concern.

The war continued to spread, to the serious injury of the population subjected to the requisitions of all the mercenary troops who, having no other work on hand, had an interest in prolonging it. And when their pay fell into arrears because the Pope appropriated the money for his own pleasures instead, they indemnified themselves by renewed exactions and pillage. Lorenzo retained the chief command of the campaign, but his men paid but little deference to his authority. Nevertheless, he acted as leader in various skirmishes, in one of which he received a wound compelling him to repair to Florence for some weeks of medical treatment before returning to the camp. Francesco Maria della Rovere, reinforced by deserters from the papal army, made frequent incursions and ravages on the enemy's territory. And he would have been victorious, had not his forces been composed of bands of adventurers, upon whom no reliance could be

placed, for the Spanish troops on either side refused to fight one another in earnest. So at last, wearied, discouraged, and penniless, he decided to surrender his dominions, after obtaining leave, through the intervention of King Francis and King Charles, to carry away his personal property, and above all the library that had been collected by Duke Frederic at an enormous expense. Accordingly, September, 1517, witnessed the conclusion of this unlucky campaign, costing 800,000 ducats, a large part of which sum was debited by the Holy Father to the Florentines, who were but scantily recompensed by the possession of San Leo * and the district of Sestino. It was at this moment that Giuliano being now dead, Machiavelli altered the dedication of his *Prince*, by addressing it to Lorenzo, who had now learned by experience what was to be expected from mercenary troops, and was at the head of a new State acquired by force of arms and good fortune. But, as we have elsewhere remarked, there is no evidence to show that the little volume was ever presented and accepted.

This war led to serious results. If the Florentines were highly disgusted at the heavy expenses they had been forced to incur, no less was the discontent of the Roman Cardinals, who were so greatly incensed that they planned a conspiracy against the Pope. For this there was accumulated material ready to their hands. Since the April of 1517, Leo X. had only nominated eight new Cardinals; hence the College comprised many adherents

* Capponi, *Storia della Repubblica di Firenze*, vol. ii. pp. 324-26; Vettori, *Sommario*, pp. 319-22.

of the Della Rovere family, who naturally were much irritated by the persecution waged against Duke Francesco Maria. And the College had also another motive for still deeper wrath. During his recent stay in Tuscany, the Pope had meddled with Sienese politics, helping on a revolution by which Borghese Petrucci, son of Pandolfo and brother of Cardinal Alfonso, was overthrown and another Petrucci, Borghese's own cousin, put in his place. Now Pandolfo had been an active contributor to the restoration of the Medici in Florence, and the Cardinal had done much towards the election of Leo X. The revolution promoted by the Pope's ingratitude not only drove Cardinal Petrucci from Siena, but also deprived him of his possessions. He was now in Rome, and so fiercely indignant that he carried a dagger whenever he went out hunting with the Pope, and even when attending Consistory, in the hope of finding opportunity and courage for vengeance. Meanwhile, he sought and gained adherents, and the campaign on Urbino added to their numbers. It was easy for him to win over Cardinal Soderini, who had never forgiven the banishment of his brother the ex-Gonfalonier, although the latter was leading a peaceful and honoured life in Rome, where he died in 1522, and was buried in Santa Maria del Popolo. Neither had he pardoned the unfulfilment of the projected matrimonial alliance between the houses of Medici and Soderini.

Cardinal Riario, kinsman of the dispossessed Duke of Urbino, being put aside and neglected by the Pope, also threw in his lot with the malcontents. All was prepared,

when certain letters from Cardinal Petrucci to his secretary were intercepted, and furnished proofs that the conspiracy was hatched and ready to break out. A surgeon of considerable note, one Battista da Vercelli, who had come to Rome under the pretext of curing the Pope of his fistula, was to give him poison. The Cardinals Petrucci, Sauli and Riario were instantly cast into prison. The first was strangled ; his secretary and the surgeon who was arrested in Florence were put to death with horrible cruelty. Cardinal Sauli was allowed to ransom his life, and so too was Cardinal Riario, who paid the sum of 50,000 ducats. Cardinals Soderini and Adriani, being forced to confess their complicity in Consistory, only escaped on payment of 12,500 ducats each.

In the course of this trial Leo X. behaved with the utmost perfidy, holding out promises to all for money and keeping faith with none after receipt of the coin. Accordingly the majority of the incriminated prelates took to flight after paying their ransoms. It was generally believed that the Pope's object was not solely revenge, but also that of reaping pecuniary advantage ; and this idea received decided corroboration when, on the 26th June, 1517, he nominated a batch of thirty-one Cardinals, exacting from them an enormous sum, said to amount to 500,000 ducats, which nevertheless was insufficient to cover his monstrous current expenses. By this scandalous and wholesale creation of Cardinals, the Pope also sought to fill the College with his own tools, and thus to strengthen his position and



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smooth the way for the future election of Cardinal Giulio, his counsellor and assistant in the lucrative operation.*

Meanwhile, the Pope was endeavouring to gain some profit from the French by making use of Francesco Vettori, now Florentine Ambassador to their Court ; and with his assistance arranged a marriage between Lorenzo de' Medici and Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne, a lady of royal blood. In March, 1518, Lorenzo made a journey to Amboise, with equal pomp to that displayed by Cæsar Borgia, and bearing gifts to his bride and to the queen valued at the sum of 300,000 ducats. He stood as godfather to the Dauphin, and was the hero of continual festivities, afterwards repeated on his return to Florence, when he again resumed the reins of government. But he had little inclination to remain in that city,† where he was unable to reign independently and had to steer his way between the republican tendencies of the Florentines and the will of the Pope, who wished him to be as docile an instrument in Tuscany as he had previously been at Urbino. In the opinion of Vettori, and the still more explicit judgment of Machiavelli, Lorenzo was by this time convinced that Florence was only to be ruled by civil methods, and therefore had at last found

* Gregorovius, *Geschichte*, etc., vol. viii. p. 214 ; Capponi, *Storia*, etc., vol. ii. p. 326. According to Gregorovius, the number of the new Cardinals was thirty-nine ; but he possibly includes the other eight previously elected. Vettori states that the total number of Cardinals created by Leo X. during his pontificate was forty-two, "and that he obtained money both from those that he elected and those that he condemned." *Sommario*, p. 339 ; M. Brosch, *Geschichte des Kirchen Staates*, vol. i. p. 50.

† Vettori, *Sommario*, p. 527.

favour with the citizens.* But it would seem that it was exactly the need of governing in this fashion, added to the delicacy of his health, which was rapidly failing from long standing disease and continued dissipation, that disgusted him with his post. So he presently went to Rome, where it was evident to all that he was a dying man. He saw no one excepting his brother-in-law, Filippo Strozzi, and a buffoon, and their companionship seemed to be his only consolation during the last hours of his life. He expired on the 4th May, 1519. Six days earlier his wife had breathed her last after giving birth to a daughter, Caterina de' Medici, afterwards only too famous as the queen who wrought so much evil upon France.

Giuliano having died on the 17th March, 1516, the legitimate line of Cosimo the Elder became extinct at the decease of Lorenzo. There only remained some illegitimate children, like the Cardinal Giulio, who was now appointed to the government of Florence. He had experience of public business, was prudent and of simple habits, and being an ecclesiastic, and therefore without heirs, there were hopes that it would be easier for him to rule with the moderation and show of liberty so dearly prized by the Florentines. In fact, this was the moment chosen to ask the advice of many influential citizens as to the form of government best adapted

* Vettori, *Sommario*, p. 328. An undated fragment of one of Machiavelli's letters, marked No. xv. at page 39, in vol. viii. of the *Opere*, states that Lorenzo had roused much hope in the city, and speaks very highly of his mildness and other good qualities.

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to Florence ; and among the many views expressed there were, as we shall see, those of Guicciardini and of Machiavelli. The first, as usual, advised a government concentrated in the hands of a few trusty counsellors ; the second a government established on popular favour, after the plan that he had always advocated.* But all these discussions ended in talk.

Meanwhile, the affairs of Europe were involved in new and serious complications, and although the Pope had no longer to study the interests of his brother Giuliano, or nephew Lorenzo, yet he still yearned with the same avidity for Parma, Piacenza, Ferrara, and Perugia, and now coveted them for the States of the Church. An attempt made against Ferrara, towards the end of 1519, resulted in failure. But in the following year he succeeded in a sudden attack on Perugia, during the absence of its ruler, Giovan Paolo Baglioni. For although up to that moment this despot had always acted like a fox and a wolf combined, he now let himself be entrapped like a lamb ; and the Pope, having seduced him by flattery, imprisoned and afterwards beheaded him in the Castle of Sant' Angelo, in June, 1520.

The death of Maximilian I. occurred during this period, at the beginning of 1519, and King Charles and King Francis I. immediately began their contest for the imperial crown. The Pope being unfavourable to the election of either, negotiated secretly with both, and hoped for the success of some secondary German potentate.

* Guicciardini, *Opere inedite*, vol. ii. p. 325 ; Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. iv. p. 105 ; Capponi, *Storia*, etc., vol. ii. p. 328.

Although the ally of France, he had, early in 1519, come to a secret agreement with Charles that was to be binding for life ; but it appears that, directly he was informed of Maximilian's decease, he refused to sign it, and concluded instead a treaty of capitulation with Francis I., whose election he then pretended to favour. There was also some rumour of another secret arrangement with Francesco Maria Sforza, son of the Moor, and heir presumptive to Lombardy, which was still in the hands of the French. It was asserted that Sforza would yield up everything to Cardinal Giulio, in exchange for the latter's purple, chancellorship, and benefices bringing in a yearly revenue of fifty thousand ducats.*

But on the 28th June, 1519, Charles was elected Emperor, and was the fifth of that name. Young, ambitious, of great political and military talent, he now added to the power of the Empire, the sovereignty of Spain, the Low Countries, and the kingdom of Naples ; it was to be foreseen, that in a short time he would be arbiter of the fate of Europe. Accordingly, the Pope was increasingly anxious to ally himself with France ; he had indeed already signed the treaty and dispatched it to Francis, who delayed adhering to it from fear of the Pontiff's accustomed duplicity. Then, without loss of time, he came to an agreement with Charles V., who not only promised to defend the States of the Florentines and the Church, but even to cede him

* Capponi, *Storia*, etc., vol. ii. pp. 329-32. See also the documents in Appendix of the same volume, pp. 535-46.

the coveted provinces of Parma and Piacenza, and to assist him against the Duke of Ferrara. Milan was to be reconquered and bestowed on Francesco Maria Sforza; the Cardinal Giulio, promoter and arranger of this treaty, was to be rewarded by a pension from the bishopric of Toledo, and another pension was stipulated for the boy Alexander, Duke Lorenzo's illegitimate son.*

There was much discussion on the motives that could have induced the Pope to throw himself thus suddenly into the arms of so powerful a potentate, and to render him still more powerful by abandoning the French King with whom he had just formed a bond of relationship. It was urged by some that he had acted with the object of strengthening the hand of Charles V. against the Reformation, which was now assuming threatening proportions. But those who best understood the Pope refused all credence in similar conjectures, inclining to think him solely urged by reasons of personal interest, like his perennial thirst for the acquisition of Parma and Piacenza, refused by Francis I., and now promised him by Charles. So says Vettori, who had then been ambassador both to Rome and France.† Guicciardini also steadfastly denies that the Pope was animated on this head by any real anxiety for religion, and even declares him responsible for the progress of the Reformation, owing to the indecency with which he promoted the sale of indulgences for the dead and the living, for the sole purpose of making money. Indignation reached

* Capponi, *Storia*, etc., vol. ii. pp. 329-32.

† Vettori, *Sommario*, pp. 334, 335.

its height, he says, when ministers of religion were seen to sell at a low price, or even gamble away in taverns, the right of freeing dead men's souls from purgatory, and when it was known that the Pope had, with incredible frivolity, granted to his sister Maddalena the emoluments on the traffic in indulgences in many parts of Germany.* "The Pope," he concludes elsewhere, "was probably moved by his desire for Parma, Piacenza, and Ferrara; perhaps by the dread of seeing the two sovereigns join against him, and possibly, too, by the hope of achieving some great result before he died. Cardinal de' Medici, who knows all the Pope's secrets, told me that he hoped first, with the aid of Charles V., to expel the French from Genoa and Milan; then, with the aid of the French, to drive Charles V. out of Naples, thus realizing the glory of Italian liberty, to which his predecessor had manifestly aspired. He well knew that his own strength was insufficient for success, and that it might not be easy to win the alliance of the power he had first combated; nevertheless, he hoped that at the fitting moment he might be able, by the election of French cardinals and other fair means, to induce the king to help him and almost enjoy the spectacle of seeing the same fate befall Cæsar that had befallen himself."† Nor should this cause us any surprise. Although constantly impelled by personal aims, Leo X. was also very aspiring. No longer having heirs to provide for, it was easier for him to be brought to

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. vi. pp. 216, 217.

† *Ibidem*, vol. vii. p. 5.

conceive, although never more than superficially, some grandiose design fitted to make him descend to posterity as a princely deliverer. Hence he now allowed it to be supposed, perhaps even believed for a moment himself, that he meant to re-establish the Florentine Republic; then feigned a desire to liberate Italy from her invaders and make her a united country. It was this great although most mutable ambition of his that continually deceived Machiavelli; who, being always inflamed by political ideals, was always ready to hope. It was thus that the secretary had been inspired to write his *Prince*, and had dispatched so many letters to Vettori and others in order to feed the flame. But the flame, whenever seeming to burn most brightly, always expired on a sudden, without leaving a spark behind.

The Pope had vacillated to the very last hour even with Charles, but this monarch brought him to the point by the threat of convoking a Council; and so at last, on the 29th May, 1521, the treaty was signed and the war instantly began. Together with the Florentines, Leo had 600 men-at-arms in readiness; Marquis Pescara, Ferdinando d'Avalos was marching the same number from Naples with the addition of 2000 foot soldiers. In the Imperial camp there were 2000 Spaniards, 4000 Italians, and as many Germans and Swiss. Francesco Guicciardini, papal governor of Reggio, sent 10,000 ducats to Morone, who was stationed at Trent with Francesco Maria Sforza and the Milanese exiles, in order that he might march to the attack of the French near Parma. Nevertheless, there was great

and general mistrust of the Pope ; it was feared that directly he should have gained what he wanted, he would leave his friends to their fate ; furthermore it was well known that even the Florentines fought unwillingly against the soldiers of France, on account of their extensive commercial relations with that country. But, on the other hand, the French were very badly led ; their best generals, like the Constable de Bourbon, and the veteran Trivulzio, having fallen into disgrace and been driven from the camp by means of court cabals. The army was now commanded by Odetto de Foix, Seigneur of Lautrec, whose chief merit consisted in his being brother to Countess Châteaubriant, the mistress of the king. Accordingly, the Imperial captains led their troops into Mantuan territory, and after crossing first the Po and then the Adda, joined forces with the Swiss, who had arrived before them, and moved together upon Milan, which was quickly taken, as Lautrec was quite incompetent for its defence.*

Leo X. was staying in his villa of Magliana when, on the 28th November, he received this happy news, and celebrated it with much rejoicing. It was winter ; he had a fire in his room, and he continually went to open the window, to look out upon his people who were making merry in honour of the victory. This sufficed to bring on a violent attack of fever, to which he

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. vii. pp. 40-67 ; Vettori, *Sommario*, pp. 334, 335 ; Gregorovius, *Geschichte*, etc., vol. viii. pp. 261-65 ; Mignet, *Rivalité*, etc., vol. i. p. 287 and fol. ; De Leva, *Storia di Carlo V.*, vol. ii. ch. ii.

succumbed on the 1st December. Rumour, as usual, hinted at poison, and many unfounded hypotheses were started; but his repeated exposure to sudden changes of temperature was more than enough to cause the fever that killed him. Vettori remarked, that it was wonderful that he should have lived so long. Although only forty-six years of age, he had by no means a strong constitution. "His head was so large as to be but ill-proportioned to the size of his body, and was always choked with catarrh; neither could he be said to be of regular living, inasmuch as he sometimes fasted too rigorously, and at other times, on the contrary, ate to excess. His life had abounded in vicissitudes; but the eight concluding years of it were in truth most fortunate, both on account of his restoration to Florence, his election and the whole of his pontificate, during which the greater the errors that he committed, the kinder was fortune in repairing them, since even the conspiracy of the Cardinals enabled him to renew the Sacred College and fill it with his own friends. He disliked trouble, and yet brought much upon himself by the continual desire to aggrandize his kindred; but fortune, by way of an additional favour, even freed him of this anxiety, by depriving him of his nephew as well as his brother."* And after this Vettori is unable to decide whether there was more to praise than to blame in Pope Leo X. Guicciardini, too, confines himself to saying that his character afforded much occasion for both, since he had proved more prudent and less good than had been

* Vettori, *Sommario*, pp. 336-40.

previously expected.* The courtiers shed tears on his loss, but for this they were assailed by pungent satires, and some one wrote from Rome saying that the Pope had died in very bad odour, and that no one had commended his departing soul save Fra Mariano the buffoon.†

Undoubtedly his character presented many contradictions. Amidst the greatest political events, during the course of sanguinary and repeated wars, while the Reformation was dividing and lacerating the Church, Leo X. not only passed his time among artists and men of letters, but gave even more of his society to *improvisatori*, singers and jesters. Fond of music, and very vain of his vocal powers, he took part in the performances of these courtiers of his, showering generous gifts on those who accompanied his singing. He frequently played at chess and at cards with his cardinals; but his chief delight was to listen to improvisations of Latin verse, and he also enjoyed measuring himself with the others in this pastime, and scoffing at those who considered themselves poets merely because they had the knack of spinning bad rhymes. These histrionic poets of his were many in number. Among them Andrea Morone of Brescia was celebrated for his declamation and his skill in accompanying himself on the violin. He is supposed to have been the original of Raphael's famous violin player. Another, Camillo Querno by name, had written a poem in twenty thousand verses

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. vii. p. 71.

† Gregorovius, *Geschichte*, etc., vol. viii. p. 262.

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of such sort that the Roman Academy conferred upon him a crown of cabbage and laurel, and, as a still greater mark of contempt, the title of *arch-poet*. The Pope was accustomed to feed this man with tid bits, and to let him drink from his own glass, watering the wine if the verses went badly, but when they pleased him capping them by improvisations of his own.

Archipoeta facit versus pro mille poetis, said Querno, and the Pope, filling up his glass, instantly replied : *Et pro mille aliis archipoeta bibit*. Querno asked for wine, saying : *Porrige quod faciat mihi carmina docta, Falernum*, whereupon the Pope reminded him that wine brought on gout : *Hoc etiam enervat debilitatque pedes*. Contests of the same kind would often be carried on between the Holy Father and any fair dame chancing to be at Court who had the gift of improvising in Latin. One day the gallant Pope finding himself surrounded by ladies, repeated half a line from Virgil, saying : Now indeed I may call myself *formosi gregis pastor* ; whereupon one of readier wit than the rest, completed the line by exclaiming, *formosior ipse*.* Another atrocious poetaster, Barabello, who was sixty years of age and thought himself a second Petrarch, was the continual laughing-stock of the Pope and his Court without ever being conscious of it. On one occasion they made him believe that he was to be crowned at the Capitol, and led him through

* Settembrini, *Lezioni di letteratura Italiana*, vol. ii. pp. 36, 37 ; Tiraboschi, *Storia della letteratura Italiana*, tom. vii. pp. 15-17. Vide at the end of the same volume : Fr. Arsilli Senogalliensis, *De Poetis urbanis ad Paulum Jovium*.

the streets in procession, dressed in ancient costume and mounted on an elephant, amid the acclamations of the people. But on reaching the bridge of St. Angelo, they brought the farce to a sudden end on some slight pretext, leaving the poor man undeceived and highly bewildered.*

The chief expenses of this Pontiff, who, with a revenue of 420,000 ducats, was always in debt, were incurred for his table, at which he entertained poets, courtiers, singers, buffoons, real or supposititious relations, and above all Florentines. "For Pope Julius II.," says the Venetian Orator, "about four thousand ducats per month were sufficient; but even eight or nine thousand ducats were not enough for Leo X. on account of the great expense of his table, and this was principally owing to the large number of Florentines fed at his board."† We have said that he seldom indulged in excess, being too epicurean in his tastes; but his dinners furnished occasion for a thousand devices, a thousand practical jokes. At one time he would serve his parasites with the flesh of monkeys or crows, at another, on the contrary, with the choicest viands. He often quitted the city and went out sporting in the dress of a layman with his eyeglass in hand; at other times he would fish in the lake of Bolsena, or stay at Magliana where he had very beautiful gardens. And wherever he was, whether in the public ways at his villa, in the Vatican, and even in his sleeping chamber, he

* Reumont, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom*. vol. iii. part ii. pp. 131, 132.

† Albéri, the already quoted *Relazione* of Marin Giorgi, pp. 56, 57. Other contemporaries repeat the same statement.

was accompanied by a swarm of poets, *literati*, artists and singers ; nor did this cause him any annoyance, for, on the contrary, he loved to be always surrounded and courted by a crowd. The Pope also took great delight in theatrical performances, and was an energetic promoter and encourager of the stage, undoubtedly helping on its progress in those days. The plays of Trissino, Rucellai, and Ariosto were frequently acted in his presence ; so, too, the famous and indecent *Calandria* of Bibbiena, one of his chief favourites and for which Baldassare Peruzzi painted the scenery in 1518. In 1519 Ariosto's play, *I Suppositi*, was performed at the Castle of St. Angelo in the apartments of Cardinal Cibo, nephew to the Pope. But it was the Pope himself who bore the expense of the entertainment, and therefore played the host, receiving and bestowing his blessing on the guests. On entering the theatre he took his seat in a prominent place and looked through his glass long and admiringly at the drop scene painted by Raphael. The curtain was decorated with a portrait of Fra Mariano, the buffoon, surrounded by tormenting devils. After the performance a splendid supper was given to the Cardinals, cavaliers and ladies, and the Pope enjoyed himself very much among the latter.*

It is a curious fact that, with all the talent and taste of which Leo X. was the undoubted possessor ; with all his desire to play, as he did, the Mæcenas on a grand scale,

* Reumont, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom.*, vol. iii. pp. 133, 134. This entertainment is minutely described in a well-known epistle of the Ferrarese Ambassador. *Vide* also E. Muntz, *Raphael, sa vie, son œuvre et son temps*, pp. 421, 422. Paris, Hachette, 1881.

he should have been almost always surrounded by very mediocre *litterati* in an age productive of so many noble intellects. Among the best of his courtiers were Bembo, Sadoleto, Molza and Rucellai, and these, although possessed of much ability, were by no means men of genius ; nearly all the rest were beneath mediocrity, often mere pedants or downright buffoons. Leo X. had neither the glory nor the good fortune to promote any one of the great literary enterprises of his day. The histories and political writings of Guicciardini and Machiavelli owed positively nothing to his assistance, although the latter was frequently stirred by the hope of gaining his favour, and the former was much employed by him in State affairs. The greatest poet of the age, Ludovico Ariosto, with whom the Pope, when Cardinal, had been very intimate and lavish of generous offers, obtained nothing but empty words when he came to Rome. Leo received him with a great show of affection, and kissed him on both cheeks ; but all ended there. So at this time the poet wrote : " I am like the magpie who having discovered a small spring of water in a time of great drought, had to let all drink before him : his master and his kin, servants, cattle and useful animals, so that at last the poor bird was left to die of thirst. Thus there is no hope for me in Rome."

*" Li nipoti e i parenti, che son tanti,
Prima hanno a ber ; poi quei che lo aintaro
A vestirsi.
Se fin che tutti beano aspetto a trarme
La volontà di bere, o me di sete
O secco il pozzo veder d'acqua parme,*

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*Meglio è star nella solita quiete,
Che provar s'egli è ver che qualunque erge
Fortuna in alto, il tuffa prima in Lete.**

It was very different with the fine arts. Nevertheless the Pope did but little for architecture and sculpture. He neglected Michel Angelo, made him waste much time in selecting blocks of marble at Carrara, set him to carve columns and execute many works that, being uncongenial to his genius, were never completed, and sometimes not even begun.

The celebrated monuments to Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, executed at this period and erected in the sacristy of S. Lorenzo in Florence, were owed to the initiative, not of the Pope but of Cardinal Giulio. Leo X. interested himself in the building of St. Peter's, which had been started with so much ardour by his predecessor, and in order to carry it on, scandalized the whole of the Christian world by the sale of indulgences in Germany. But the money collected by this unworthy means was more efficacious in hastening the outbreak of the Reformation, than in promoting the construction of the mighty temple, which indeed progressed more slowly than under former Popes who had devoted themselves to it in earnest. But no one can deny the great encouragement given by Leo X. to painting, and especially to the works of Raphael, whom he patronized and loved so sincerely as to have serious thoughts of raising him to the purple. It is true that even as regards painting,

* Ariosto, Satira iv., verses 154 and fol. in the *Opere Minori* (Le Monnier edition), vol. i. p. 184 and fol.

the Pope only carried on the great undertakings previously begun by Julius II.; but it is certain that in these years, Raphael was incited by his encouragement and appreciation to produce a positively enormous number of masterpieces, that while conferring immortality on the painter's name, shortened his life, and increased the general lamentation for his premature decease.

At the time of the election of Leo X., Raphael was at work on the Hall of Heliodorus, and no sooner was this finished than he began the Destruction of Borgo. The themes now given to the painter were of a more limited, narrower, and we might say, of a more personal range, owing to the greater vanity of the new Pope, who desired the allusions to himself to be much too transparent. Accordingly his figure is always obtruded in the foreground, sometimes no little to the injury of the artist's noble conceptions. During these years Raphael took in hand the walls of the Vatican Loggie, constructed by the architect Bramante, and covered them with ornate designs, arabesques, and different compositions, painted by his scholars, but under his direction and from his own designs. He was thus the inventor of a new style, inspired by works of antiquity, but nevertheless the distinct outcome of his own fancy and of the Italian Renaissance. Indeed, these arabesques may be regarded as the fitting and æsthetic framework of the period. He likewise painted the St. Cecilia and the Spasimo; made the admirable designs for the legend of Psyche in the Farnesina palace, afterwards painted by his best pupils, and completed a very large number of

portraits. It was also during the pontificate of Leo X. that he produced the Madonna of San Sisto and the Transfiguration, undoubtedly two of the grandest of his works ; and the same Pope gave him an appointment almost equivalent to that of director in chief of all the Fine Arts and of all excavations. He therefore employed much time in surveying and sketching the old monuments of Rome, and superintending excavations for the discovery of others. And with the aid of Fulvio Antiquario, he undertook the difficult task of a complete plan of ancient Rome, based on careful study of its buildings. He left a report on this subject, that was long attributed to Baldassare Castiglione, and actually published under his name, but was afterwards recognized as the work of Raphael.* It is impossible to realize how the energies of one man could have been equal to so much labour ; it is easy to understand how he came to die in the year 1520 at the early age of twenty-seven.

It can excite no surprise that Leo X. should have lavished treasures in the promotion of works of similar quantity and quality ; and when it is added that although very liberal in all his transactions with Raphael and artists in general, he was still more generous towards his singers, players, and parasites,† it will not seem astonishing that his splendid revenues should have been insufficient to cover his expenses. Alexander VI. and

* Calcagnini wrote of him as follows :

*Nunc Romam in Roma querit, reperitque Raphael,
Querere magni hominis, sed reperire Dei est.*

† Vide on this head E. Muntz, *Raphael*, etc., ch. xii. p. 426 and fol.

even Julius II. habitually appropriated the fortunes of all prelates who died in Rome, and for this purpose Alexander frequently resorted to the expedient of procuring their death by poison or the dagger. Leo X., however, being far more humane in such respects, never committed this iniquity, and thus from all sides people thronged to Rome to enjoy the gay life of the city, its novel tranquility and the generous protection of its ruler. But the Pope left a vast accumulation of debts at his decease. He owed 200,000 ducats to the Bini bank, 32,000 to the Gaddi, to the Ricasoli 10,000, to Cardinal Salviati 80,000, to Cardinal Santi Quattro 150,000, and as much to Cardinal Armellini. The Strozzi were on the point of failure, many of Leo's intimates were ruined. The treasury of the Apostolic Chamber was so empty that there was not enough in it to purchase a new bier, and thus it fell out that one previously used for the burial of Cardinal Riario had to serve for the obsequies of the most splendid of the successors of St. Peter.*

* Gregorovius, *Geschichte*, etc., vol. viii. pp. 260-262. For particulars touching this Pope, besides the well-known works of Roscoe, Ranke, Gregorovius and Reumont, there may now be consulted the new works to which we have occasionally referred; i.e. *Raphael, sa vie*, etc., by E. Muntz and the *Geschichte des Kirchen Staates* of Brosch. The latter author gives a brief account of the life of Leo X. at the beginning of his book.

CHAPTER VI.

Machiavelli and his family in the country—His children—His correspondence with his nephew Giovanni Vernacci—His journey to Genoa—The Oricellarii Gardens—The *Discourses* of Guicciardini—*Discourse on the reform of the Florentine government*—The mission to Lucca—*Summary of the affairs of Lucca*—*The Life of Castruccio Castracani*.

THE literary fashions in vogue at the court of Leo X. might have shown Machiavelli the expediency of turning to the composition of verses, satires and comedies. Such works would certainly have proved more lucrative to him ; and in various essays he had already shown a gift in that direction, of which he gave still better proofs at a later date. We have seen how he wrote his *Decades* while engaged in a multiplicity of affairs, that left him barely time for necessary repose ; we have seen how after his disgrace he passed a great part of his days beside a spring in the shade of his woods studying the Latin and Italian poets. And from a letter dated 17th December, 1517, written by him to Ludovico Alamanni in Rome, we not only learn that he had just read Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* with great admiration, but that he complained of not being included among the many poets therein mentioned ; adding that he was engaged upon a poem called *L'Asino*,* in which he should certainly render

* *Opere*, vol. viii. Letter xlv.

justice to the eminent merits of Ariosto. This poem, containing many satirical allusions to Machiavelli's contemporaries, was soon put aside, and although at this period he undoubtedly wrote more verses and other purely literary works, they were not compositions of any length. His spirit was too sadly disturbed by recent events in Florence, and by his own misfortunes ; his mind still pre-occupied by reminiscences and memories of the past ; his attention too earnestly absorbed in meditation on the events that were daily agitating all Europe and threatening Italy. Hence it was only in political writing that he found any solace, since this alone could take possession of his soul, and by engaging all his faculties, succeed in bringing him oblivion of the miserable conditions of the life to which he was condemned.

He remained therefore in his rustic abode, and employed his time in giving polishing touches to the *Prince*, continuing the *Discourses*, and completing the *Art of War*. In this little villa, situated among the hills at several hours' distance from Florence, he seemed to be imprisoned among woods and fields, and exiled from the native city that had been the scene of all his activities and joys, of his perished hopes and his calamities. He felt himself, as it were, isolated from the world, and sought for peace in solitude and study. Yet whenever he looked towards the north, he had a glimpse, between the curves of the gracious hills, of the dome, the belfry and the Palace tower that continually reminded him of the past and never allowed him to forget the present. At that time he was the parent of five children, four

boys and a girl. Bernardo, the eldest, was born on the 8th November,* 1503; Pietro, the youngest, on the 4th September, 1514.† Of the three intermediate children, Lodovico, Guido and Bartolommea, the age is not certified. But in short, the family was numerous, the patrimony very scanty, and these children caused anxiety. One or two, like Pietro, who afterwards led an adventurous military life, were still of very tender years. Guido was as yet in his boyhood; for, as we shall see by a letter of his dated 1527, he was still studying grammar. Of very gentle disposition, he embraced the ecclesiastical and literary career, but never rose above mediocrity.‡ Of Bernardo, who was considerably his senior, very little is known. But a sentence of punishment pronounced against him in 1528 for blasphemy at the gambling table, and for an attempted outrage on a woman of the neighbourhood, gives us no good opinion of his character.§ And

* This is the date given in Passerini (*Opere* (P. M.), vol. i. p. 1.), in many other writers, and that is confirmed in *Libro iii. dell' Età* (in Cod. 106, S. Spirito, Gonfalone Nicchio) in the *Archivio delle Tratte* at Florence.

† Passerini gives the date of 14th December, 1514, but as usual omits to quote the document from which the information was derived. In the life of Piero, written by his brother Guido, that is to be found among the *Carte del Machiavelli* (Case v. No. 188) and published by Signor Amico at the end of his *Vita di N. Machiavelli*, we are told instead that Piero was born the 4th September, 1514, *dum sol oriebatur*. This date is also confirmed by the epitaphs, composed for the same Piero by his brother Guido (Case v. No. 170 and fol.).

‡ In the above mentioned Case v. there are several of Guido's literary compositions.

§ On the 22nd November he had been condemned by the Eight to a year's relegation, three miles distant from Florence, and to a fine of 150 *lire*. So says Signor Amico at page 613. But as he gives no precise indications we have failed to discover the original sentence in the Archives.

Lodovico, next in age to Bernardo, was of a very violent disposition. One of his letters, dated 14th August, 1525,* introduces us to him at Adrianople, where he was engaged in commerce, and living in the midst of continual strife, always wrathful and panting for revenge. Already in the same year he had been several times punished by the Eight for his share in riots, which had led to bloodshed on both sides. Nor were these quarrels in honourable causes; one of them having been excited by jealousy for a woman of evil life.† Later he was able, at least partially, to redeem his character by fighting and losing his life in defence of liberty, during the siege of Florence.‡ But in the meantime he was certainly one of the sons that caused most anxiety to their father. Of the girl Bartolommea, or Baccia, afterwards married to one of the Ricci, we know very little; but from the second will drawn up by Machiavelli, in 1522, we learn that he thought of ensuring her a dowry in the *Monte delle Fanciulle*, but had not yet succeeded in doing so.

Even Marietta, his wife, remains very much in the

* To be found with another, dated 22nd May, 1527, among the *Carte del Machiavelli*, Case v. Nos. 46 and 22. *Vide* Appendix of Italian edition, document i. There could have been no great interval between the birth of Bernardo and of Lodovico, since they were both balloted at the same time for the Gonfalone di Nicchio (Reg. orig. of the Ballot of 1524, at c. 12). On the 8th June, 1517, Machiavelli wrote to his nephew Giovanni Vernacci: "Bernardo and Lodovico are reaching manhood." *Vide* Appendix of Italian edition, document iii.

† These sentences also are recorded by Amico at p. 614. We have only discovered in the Archives the first, dated 11th May, 1525. It is among the decrees of the Eight (May and August, 1525, at c. 6r). In this Lodovico is sentenced to pay two gold florins, for having thrashed a notary.

‡ This fact is mentioned by the historians of the siege.

background. We have only a single letter of hers, one written to Machiavelli in Rome, shortly after the birth of one of her children. Unfortunately it has no date ; but certainly belongs to an earlier period than the times now under notice. It is written in a spirit of sincere affection, we may even say of love, towards her husband. She complains of the infrequency of his letters, and reminds him that he well knows that she is never in good spirits when he is away from her, and less than ever now that she hears that there is much sickness in Rome. "Imagine if I can be happy when I can rest neither by night nor day. The baby is well and resembles you. He is as white as snow, but his head is like a bit of black velvet, and he is hairy as you are. And his resemblance to you makes me think him beautiful, and he is as lively as though he were a year old, and he opened his eyes before he was quite born, and made his voice heard all over the house. Our little girl is not at all well. Be sure you come back." * All the family letters still extant

* This letter was first given to the world by Signor Innocenzo Giamperi, in his book on the "*Monumenti del Giardino Puccini*" (Pistoia, 1845), see page 288, and afterwards in a "*Strenna Poliantea con l'Almanacco delle Dame*, for the year 1846, page 43 (Florence, Grand Ducal Press). It was also republished by Amico and Mordenti, but in every case very incorrectly. All give it the date of 1524, by an erroneous interpretation of the original manuscript, which only says, *on the 24th day*. It may be conjectured that the letter was written in 1506. At that time Machiavelli was absent on his second Legation to Rome, and although, as he was bound to follow the travels of Julius II., there is no reason to suppose that he was staying in the city, yet all letters to him were sent to Rome, on account of his being accredited to that Court. The fact of his being perpetually on the move would also explain the scarcity of his letters to his family, so much complained of by Marietta. The baby must have been Lodovico, who, as we have seen, was probably the third-born ; while the little girl to whom

clearly prove to us that Marietta remained an affectionate wife and mother to the close of her life. And although we have not one of Machiavelli's letters to her, yet it is plain from the tenour of those written to his children, that, notwithstanding a few infidelities, some real and some merely imaginary, he too loved his wife to the last, and was a much better man in his own home than he wishes us to suppose.

There exists another correspondence of his of the same epoch with Giovanni Vernacci, son of his sister Primerana, who had gone to Pera on commercial business. This correspondence allows us occasional glimpses of the deep sadness by which Machiavelli was then oppressed, and also of the genuine and lively affection maintained between uncle and nephew. The former, as we have seen elsewhere, confided all his troubles to Vernacci from the very beginning, then in the August of 1513, gave him loving counsels, and told him how, in addition to the other calamities of that most unlucky year, he had suffered the loss of a little girl, who had only lived for three days after her birth.* In 1514, Machiavelli wrote to him on business matters, and proposed arranging a

allusion is made, must have been Bartolommea. There is no reason to think that the letter could have been written in 1503, during Machiavelli's first mission to Rome, for at that time he had only one child, a son. Nor can it be of the year 1524, for although he then spent a few days near Rome and at Civita Vecchia, no child was born to him in that year, nor was Bartolommea still in her childhood. In document ii. of Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition we give Marietta's letter in its original form.

* *Vide* at document iii. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition a letter dated 4th August, 1513, the original of which is in the Royal Library of Parma. We are indebted to the librarian's kindness for the copy in our possession.

marriage for him ; on the 17th August, 1515, he made excuses for not writing more frequently, "because the times are of a sort to make me forget myself. Yet I never forget thee, and always love thee as my own son, and myself and my belongings are always at thy disposition." * These letters were often lost on the way to the East ; whereupon the nephew would write again complaining of his uncle's silence, and Machiavelli was obliged to reiterate the same assurances of affection. "The loss of my letters will make thee think that I have forgotten thee, but this is by no means the case, inasmuch as fate has left me nothing but my family and friends, and to these I cling. And if I do not write with much greater frequency, it is because I have grown useless to myself, my relations and friends, for so has my painful destiny willed it. The only good thing left to me is my sound health and that of all my family." † Later, in 1517, he wrote to him again, and also made his sons write ; but, as usual, the letters miscarried, and therefore he sent him another epistle on the 5th January, 1518. Of the latter he made two copies and gave them to two different persons, and wrote all this in detail to his nephew on the 25th of the same month. ‡ And on the 8th June he told him that he loved him more than

* *Vide* document iii. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition. Letter dated 20th April, 1514, and *Opere*, vol. viii. Letter xlii. (dated 17th August, 1515) p. 150.

† *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 151. Letters xliii. and xliv. (dated 19th November, 1515, and 15th February, 1516).

‡ *Vide* document iii. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition. Letters of the 5th and 25th January, 1518.

ever now that "he had proved himself to be a good and worthy man. Indeed I am proud of thee, since I brought thee up. As in old times my house is always at thy service, although it be but a poor and comfortless place."* No less affectionate were the letters of the nephew. On the 31st October, 1517, he wrote as usual for news of his uncle and the family, complaining that none had reached him for the last twelve months. "You no longer think of me as a beloved nephew. Yet as I still love you with a filial affection, I hope that if you may have lost your pen and paper for writing to me, you will not have lost the love you have so long borne me."† It is clear from other letters that the uncle's love for the nephew consisted of more than mere words, for in the midst of numerous worries, Machiavelli often found time to attend to the affairs of the attached and distant kinsman who placed such entire confidence in him.‡

Such then was the real man, so long held up to us as a monster, alike incapable of any delicate feeling, honesty or genuine affection.

In the meantime he continued to work and struggle against adversity and trouble, proving himself ready for anything by which he could honestly earn an addition to the family purse. In April, 1518, he went to Genoa

* *Opere*, vol. viii. Letter xlv. p. 152.

† *Vide* document iv. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition. The original letter is to be found in the Archivio Bargagli.

‡ *Vide* Letter of the 15th April, 1520, first published by Prof. A. D'Ancona, and bearing the number lv. at page 1194 of the Usigli edition of the *Opere*, published in Florence, 1857. *Vide* also document iv. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition, Vernacci's letter, dated 8th May, 1521.

to arrange the affairs of certain Florentine traders, by collecting their credits in that city, amounting to several thousand crowns, and then returned to his villa.* From time to time, however, he went down into Florence, where he still had a house, upon some business requiring his attention, and where, hostile fortunes notwithstanding, he yet retained a few trusty friends, whose society gave him consolation.

As the times had gradually grown quieter, there had again sprung up in the city a few of the literary associations that were so general throughout Italy in the sixteenth century, formed an essential element of society in those days, and were among the most delightful and valued pleasures of all cultured Florentines. The best renowned association at this period was that holding its sittings in the Oricellarii Gardens, and attended by many of the first *litterati* of Florence and Italy.

Bernardo Rucellai, who flourished in the second half of the fifteenth century, was the author of some Latin satires, a partizan of the Medici, and a rich and influential citizen, purchased, towards the end of the century, an orchard in Via della Scala, spent much money in building a splendid palace in it, and laid out a still more splendid garden, that was soon renowned for the beauty of its trees. At the present time we can still judge for ourselves of the palace and garden, and putting aside the strange colossal statue of Polyphemus, erected at a later date by the Medici, and sundry small stone buildings added in our days, and in curious contrast with

* *Vide* document v. in Appendix (III.) of Italian edition.

their antique surroundings, we can form a sufficiently exact idea of the former character of the place. The trees are still in full luxuriance, and their shade still seems to invite us to thought and conversation. Between their leafy branches we still behold the elegant and harmonious lines of the old palace, which is of the severe architectural type of the school of Filippo Brunelleschi and Leon Battista Alberti. The spacious halls on the ground floor are still open, as a sure refuge from midday heats or passing showers.* Here it were easy to forget the present, evoke the shadows of the past, and listen in imagination to the voices of those who so frequently met in this spot and whose names are so often mentioned in history. Bernardo Rucellai, the founder of this pleasant resort, died in 1514.

The years immediately preceding and following 1512 had been too turbulent to leave any leisure for peaceful intellectual intercourse; therefore in those days the gardens were little frequented. Of Cosimo, Bernardo's immediate successor, history makes scanty mention, although it has a great deal to tell us of the second-born, Palla Rucellai, who filled high offices of the State, and was a zealous adherent of the Medici nearly all his life, only deserting their cause in 1537. Another brother, Giovanni, also, like the rest of the Rucellai, a friend of

* *Vide the Curiosità storico-artistiche fiorentine* by Count Luigi Passerini (series i. Florence, Jouhaud, 1866), the portion entitled: *Degli Orti Oricellarii*. The author remarks that the site of the palace only having been purchased in 1482, when L. B. Alberti was already dead, it is impossible that, as many have asserted, the latter could have been the architect employed by Rucellai.

the Medici, to whom indeed they were bound by ties of kindred, devoted himself to letters with great success, and was the well-known author of the tragedy *Rosmunda* and of the poem *Le Api*. Being the disciple and friend of the first *litterati* of Florence, he began to gather them about him ; but afterwards, when aspiring to the purple, naturally repaired to Rome to the court of Leo. X., his cousin and his friend. Assuming the ecclesiastical habit, and being made a prelate, he passed the greater part of his time in Rome, remaining there even under Clement VII., who nominated him governor of the castle of St. Angelo, an office preserved by him to his death, which took place in 1525, just when he was hoping for further promotion.

Consequently, although the Rucellai palace had been much frequented for some time, the first member of the family to organize regular meetings in the Orti was Bernardo, Cosimo's son, who, being born in 1495, the same year that his father died, afterwards adopted his name and was known to all as Cosimino. He dedicated himself to literature, composed poetry, showed great kindness and generosity towards all his friends, and gave great hopes of his future. But he suffered from a painful disease brought on by youthful excesses, and unskilful treatment had reduced him to so crippled a condition, that he was always obliged to lie stretched in a sort of cradle, or to be carried about on a litter. This misfortune, added to his affability of manner, kindly nature and active intellect, drew around him all the best friends of the Rucellai family. And they constantly visited

him, in the certainty that he was always to be found either in the house or garden, where alone he could breathe the outer air.*

Two of the most assiduous frequenters of these meetings were Zanobi Buondelmonti and Luigi di Piero Alamanni. The latter was a poet considerably known by his lyrics, his poems of chivalry, and above all by his poetical work *La Coltivazione*, in which he had sought to imitate the Georgics of Virgil and given proof of much elegance and an easy if somewhat monotonous style. These two youths, who afterwards proved themselves ardent promoters of liberty, were at that time friends of the Medici, like the majority of the circle frequenting the Oricellarii Gardens.† Two cousins also were frequent visitors, and these having both the same name of Francesco da Diacceto were distinguished by the colour of their clothes, as the Nero (black) and the Pagonazzo (dark red), and both belonged to the school of the learned men. The second, a son of Zanobi da Diacceto, and born in 1466, had been one of the chief followers of Ficino, had written many philosophical works, and lectured at the Studio.‡ Another Diacceto, of a different family, but a pupil of Pagonazzo and known as Il Diacettino, was

* Nardi, *Storia*, vol. ii. pp. 85, 86; Nerli, *Commentarii*, p. 138; Passerini, *Genealogia della famiglia Rucellai*. Florence, Cellini, 1861.

† *Vide* document vi. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition. Letter from Luigi Alamanni, younger brother of the Lodovico mentioned above, to his father, dated from Rome, 7th January, 1518. It shows that at this time the Alamanni were still on the best terms with the Medici.

‡ He died in 1522, and a memoir of him from the pen of Benedetto Varchi was published with F. da Diacceto's work *I tre libri d'amore*, at Venice (Giolito), in 1561.

also one of the most assiduous visitors to the Orti ; he knew Greek and had obtained from the cardinal a lectureship at the Studio.* Like Alamanni and Buondelmonti, he was ambitious, enterprising, and very passionate. All these three were friends of a certain Giovan Battista della Palla, who, having borne a great affection to Giuliano de' Medici, hoped on that account to win a cardinal's hat, and therefore soon went away to intrigue in Rome. But, as we shall have occasion to see, he kept up continual communication by letter with the Florentine friends who were afterwards his fellow conspirators.

Among the many others frequently to be found in the Orti Oricellarii, were the two well-known historians, Jacopo Nardi and Filippo dei Nerli, the former a Medicæan, the latter a republican, but still on good terms with the cardinal. All the Rucellai were often present, as well as all celebrated Italian men of letters who happened to be in Florence. Of these we will only mention Giangiorgio Trissino, that famous gentleman of Vicenza, scholar, grammarian, tragic and epic poet, author of *La Sofonisba* and the *Italia liberata dei Goti*, whose name was at that time on all men's lips.†

* Among the masses of papers left by Varchi, comprising the rough sketches and notes made by him in preparation for his Histories, there is a note to the effect that this Diacceto "was not related to Francesco, his family having sprung from a different root. But he was always his great friend and pupil, and indeed attended his lectures while studying Greek." Florence National Library, 9, f. 11. The lectureship at the Studio is mentioned by Nardi and others. Nerli and Nardi give many particulars of those frequenting the Orti at this period.

† *Vide* the work by B. Morsolin, entitled, *G. G. Trissino, o monografia di un letterato del secolo XVI. Vicenza, 1878.*

It has been a mistake to regard these meetings as a renewal, or even as a continuance, of the Platonic Academy. The latter expired with Ficino, and its attempted resuscitation took place at a much later date and under different auspices. Those who now frequented the *Orti Oricellarii*, belonged, with the exception of Francesco da Diacceto and a few others, not only to a posterior generation, but to one of a totally different nature. Although all were admirers of antiquity, all more or less versed in ancient languages, they were not of the same stuff as the men who in the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent spent weeks and months in discussing the ideas of Plato, the style of Aristotle, the allegories of Plotinus and Porphyrius, and points of grammar and rhetoric. A few of the present men were mere politicians, practised in public affairs ; the rest were poets, writers of history and of Italian prose, true *litterati* of the *Cinquecento*, contemporaries of Raphael, Michel-Angelo, Guicciardini and Ariosto, although intellectually inferior to those mighty ones, and therefore less independent, they were more servile in their attachment to antiquity. Nor should it be supposed that these reunions were animated at that time by any hostility to Pope and Cardinal, notwithstanding the frequent assertions made to that effect, on account of the conspiracy afterwards formed by a few of the regular visitors to the Orti. On the contrary, the majority were friends of the Medici ; and even those who afterwards conspired against them, had long been on excellent terms with them and first alienated by motives of a strictly personal nature. Then, and then only, political passion came into play.

An additional proof of this may be seen in the often related incident of how Leo X. was invited to the Orti during his stay in Florence in 1515, and how Rucellai's *Rosmunda* was performed before him in honour of his visit.

These meetings were at their most flourishing point when Machiavelli first joined them, and his attendance was certainly no sign of alienation from the Medici cause, but rather indeed of the reverse. And in fact we find that not long after this he was introduced to the Medici household. On the 17th March, 1519, Filippo Strozzi wrote from Rome to his brother Lorenzo: "I am well "content that you have taken Machiavello to the Medici "house, for if he can gain a little favour with the masters "he is a person who will rise in the world." * On the one hand, this letter serves to confirm what we have said concerning the company in the Oricellarii Gardens; on the other, it explains how Cardinal de' Medici was just beginning to show some friendliness to Machiavelli. And if it was only at this juncture that the author of the *Prince* gained a footing in the Medici halls, that also

* Florence Archives, *Carte Strozzi-Uguccioni*, file 108, at c. 40r. Machiavelli's friend, Filippo Strozzi, had been the pupil of Marcello Adriani, and was related to the Medici by his marriage with Clarice, daughter of Piero de' Medici and Alfonsina Orsini. This fact may perhaps explain how it was that, so far back as 1512, when Machiavelli had no personal acquaintance with the Medici, he should yet have addressed some of his writings to them. (*Vide* vol. ii. p. 183 and fol. of *Italian edition of this work*.) And the letter "*to a lady*," supposed by many to be addressed to Alfonsina (vol. ii. p. 183, note 1), was far more probably written to Clarice de' Medici, Filippo's wife. Filippo's letter quoted above, is dated from Rome, 17th March, 1519. But it is uncertain whether the year is indicated after the Roman or the Florentine style.

proves how very exaggerated, or rather entirely supposititious, were the intimate relations alleged by many writers to have existed between him and Lorenzo and Giuliano.

Naturally Machiavelli was now very well received in the Oricellarii Gardens; Cosimino in particular admired him greatly, and was drawn to him by a sincere feeling of affection that was heartily reciprocated. It was to him and Zanobi Buondelmonti that Machiavelli dedicated the *Discourses*, to him that he alluded with earnest grief in *The Art of War*, soon after Cosimino's premature death.

In the midst of these new friends the ex-secretary began to give readings from his *Discourses*. They were received with much favour and led to many animated discussions, that always ended by his hearers urging him to devote himself with untiring energy to the work he had undertaken, the which, as Nardi said, was "of a new argument, never (that I know) essayed by any other." And he goes on to say that the new guest was so much beloved by those young men, that they even found a delicate mode of assisting him, for they took unspeakable delight in his conversation, and so greatly admired his writings, that he was not held entirely free from blame when their minds were found to be inflamed to the pitch of bold and dangerous enterprises in favour of liberty.*

This enthusiastic reception is easily accounted for. Machiavelli was a genuine admirer of the ancients, but in studying their works his own independence of intellect had remained intact, so that his words impressed these

* Nardi, *Storia*, vol. ii. p. 86.

hearers—mostly servile imitators of antique models—like the revelation of an inner conscience. In the midst of this Medicean band, he, who could neither speak nor write in opposition to his real sentiments, openly declared his love of liberty, his enthusiasm for the Roman Republic. Nor did this provoke any scandal. At that time every learned Italian felt admiration for ancient Rome; every true Florentine was a republican at heart, and the Medici themselves feigned to govern Florence as a republic and promised to revert more and more to republican forms. Machiavelli, therefore, spoke frankly, and freely expounded his ideas before these youths; gave vent to his enthusiasm and continually recurred to his favourite scheme of a Militia Ordinance for the arming of the people. By examples from ancient history, he taught how Italy might be armed in such fashion as to be able to repel foreign invasion and preserve the national dignity and independence.

These were the identical arguments he afterwards embodied in *The Art of War*, and read to his young friends as he went on. In fact, this new work, that we shall soon have to pass in review, is composed in the form of dialogues held in the Oricellarii Gardens between the principal frequenters of those meetings. The enthusiasm Machiavelli awakened by these speeches and readings continued to increase; but, being absorbed in his subject and carried away by the current of his ideas, he was not aware that his words sometimes acted on the minds of his youthful hearers like sparks upon gunpowder, and might well have an equally perilous effect.

Accordingly, he used to go quietly back to his country solitude, and note down the questions discussed for future readings and arguments.

All this did him no injury with the Medici ; on the contrary, it caused him to be considered in Strozzi's phrase, "*una persona per sorgere*" (a rising man). In fact he was already much spoken of in the cardinal's circle. This prelate who, when in Rome, had formerly interrogated him through Vettori as to the general state of Italian politics, now urged him to write on the best way of reforming the government of Florence, and to address his discourse to Leo X., the *de facto* lord of the city. It was then the custom of the Medici, and especially of Cardinal Giulio, to interrogate persons of influence in this fashion ; just as it was a favourite custom of the Florentines to write their opinions on daily events, on reforms to be effected in the government, in order to meet the wishes of the ever restless city. And accordingly we are possessed of no inconsiderable number of discourses of this kind, written at this period, and of varied degrees of eloquence, boldness and sagacity.

At an earlier part of this work,* we have seen how Guicciardini, when in Spain in 1512, already foretelling the overthrow of Soderini, but still ignorant of the restoration of the Medici, had composed a discourse, in which with very great acumen he suggested various plans for increasing the strength and safety of the republic. Soon after, on learning the altered conditions of the city, he wrote another, in which, without too plainly showing his

* Vol. iii. of this work, p. 242 and fol.

readiness to change sides, he expounded the methods by which the Medici might best consolidate their rule.* He treated the same subject with more frankness and at greater length in a third Discourse, composed in 1516, three years after he had returned to Florence and become one of the warmest adherents of the Medici. "The Medici," he then wrote, "possessed themselves of the city against the will and desire of the majority of its inhabitants. The election of Leo X. had, it was true, effected a change in favour of the new rulers; nevertheless, it was still expedient for them to make sagacious provision for the future, in order to avoid finding themselves suddenly exposed to very grave dangers. The chief obstacle to such provision lay in the indifference of Giuliano and Lorenzo, who had placed their ambitions so high that they paid little attention to Florence, designing rather to erect themselves a State elsewhere. And this was a perilous dream, since it could not be carried out without encountering insurmountable difficulties.

For although Florence was apparently a republic, the Medici held a far stronger and more assured dominion there than any they could hope to establish at Parma, Modena or elsewhere. It was well for them to remem-

* The first of these Discourses stands third in the *Opere inedite* (vol. ii. p. 262 and fol.) bears the date of 27th August, with the addition in Guicciardini's hand: "In Spain, anno 1512, and I was near to the end (of my "discourse) when I had news that the Medici had entered Florence." The second comes after and therefore stands fourth in the *Opere inedite* (vol. ii. p. 316 and fol.). They are preceded by two others, relating to events of 1495, and that may be regarded as literary exercises, of which Guicciardini wrote a good number, and often for the purpose of using them in his Histories as he has sometimes actually done.

ber that the nephews of Calixtus III. and Pius II., by being content with little had been able to preserve their power even after the death of those popes, whereas the Duke of Valentinois had met his fall by aspiring to a new and extensive State. "And the reason of this is clear to us, for if it be a hard matter for private individuals to acquire great States, so it is harder still to maintain them, because of the infinite difficulties in which a new principality is involved." * It is plain by this that Guicciardini was not only entirely opposed to Machiavelli's illusions with regard to Cæsar Borgia, but even to the fundamental idea of the *Prince* and to the counsels already offered by him to the Medici by means of Vettori, on the formation of a new State at Parma and Modena.

In Guicciardini's opinion the Medici would have done far better and acted more wisely in renouncing these hazardous dreams, and solely studying how to preserve their power in Florence. To that end it was requisite to form a nucleus of sure and faithful friends, well acquainted with the humours of the city and therefore fitted to afford help and advice. "Without trusting in them too blindly, and always keeping your hand on the curb, it is yet necessary to grant them power and favours. By favours we are safe to gain the goodwill of all men; since these are no longer the times of the Greeks and Romans when men were satisfied with empty glory. At the present day there is no one in Florence so attached to liberty as not to be ready to accept any other kind of

* Guicciardini, *Opere inedite*, vol. ii. p. 329.

government, provided he can obtain a greater share in it and an easier life than under the republic; while, as regards the bulk of the citizens, it is sufficient to be economical, so as not to overburden them with taxes, to take care that the common law shall be justly administered, to protect the weak against the strong, to show courtesy to all. Then as to those who advise hasty assertion of absolute rule over the city, without any shadow of moderation or freedom, it must be remembered that such would be the worst plan of all to adopt in Florence, the most full of suspicion and difficulty, and in the long run also a very cruel and therefore dangerous method for all parties." *

Such were the counsels offered to the Medici by Guicciardini; very different were those given by Machiavelli now that his turn had come to be interrogated.† In point of fact, he advised neither more nor less than the re-establishment of the republic, while yet endeavouring to arrange some way in which the Pope and Cardinal might retain their actual power for life, since he well knew that in default of some such arrangement all his proposals would go for nothing. On this account many have charged him with inconsistency, urging against him that after having suggested in the *Prince* an absolute form of government to Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici, he now

* *Opere inedite*, vol. ii., *Discourse v.* p. 325 and fol.

† *Discourse touching the reform of the government of Florence, written at the instance of Pope Leo X.* *Opere*, vol. iv. p. 105 and fol. Although in the printed editions it is stated that this Discourse was made *ad istanza di Papa Leone X.*, yet from internal evidence it is clear that Machiavelli was directly interrogated by the Cardinal, but not by the Pope.

counselled Pope Leo X. to adopt that of a republic. But all trace of inconsistency disappears when it is remembered that the *Prince* was written to demonstrate the possibility of erecting a new State by force ; and how, when erected in Italy, it might be aggrandized so as to include the whole of the Peninsula. But now Giuliano and Lorenzo, the men to whom these counsels had been addressed, were both dead, and Machiavelli was interrogated by the Cardinal with reference to a new and very different scheme. It was no longer a question of building up a new state at Parma, Modena or elsewhere ; it was simply a question of governing Florence. Machiavelli had frequently asserted in the *Discourses*, in his private letters and in nearly all his political works, that although in northern and southern Italy no government but that of a monarchy was now possible, that a monarchy alone could in those parts establish a new State or unite the whole country, yet that as regarded Tuscany alone, and more especially Florence, no government but that of a republic could enduringly succeed on account of the old customs and great equality of the citizens.

Florence alone was in question at this moment, and even the Pope and the Cardinal appeared convinced that all the Florentines more or less desired a republic. And as neither of these churchmen had any legitimate heir, and both knew for certain that at their own death the direct line of Cosimo the Elder and Lorenzo the Magnificent would be extinct, so they only feigned to shrink from decisive steps towards a republic, in order not to renounce their absolute protectorate during

their lifetime. Whether these sentiments were true or assumed, they declared them openly and made them believed by many. Machiavelli was convinced of having discovered the solution of the hard problem of the safe establishment of liberty, together with the absolute protectorate for life of Pope and Cardinal. And with this object in view he wrote his new *Discourse*.

He starts, therefore, by inquiring into the causes of the instability of all the successive governments of Florence, and attributes them to the fact that all these governments having been organized in favour of a party rather than of the general welfare, were always a hybrid and precarious mixture of monarchical and republican institutions. "These mixed governments," he says, "always prove very feeble, being open to injury at so many points. A kingdom is ruined by inclining towards a republic, a republic by inclining towards a kingdom. But mixed governments fall to ruin on all sides, whether they tend towards a republic or a principality. There are many that extol the government of Cosimo and Lorenzo, and would wish to establish another in its likeness at the present day. But that government was not exempt from the defects and dangers we have noted in the others, and such defects would be vastly increased at the present day. For in those times the Medici were reared and educated in the city, were thoroughly acquainted with it, and ruled it with a familiarity that is no longer possible to them now that they have become mighty potentates. Then the majority of the citizens were favourable to them, now they are against them.

Nor were there then so many armed sovereigns in Italy as at present, against whom no weak government could now oppose any resistance. Many men assert that Florence cannot remain without a head ; but these do not reflect that there may be an official head and a private head. No one can doubt that if a private head had to be chosen, all would prefer one of the Medici house. But if choice had to be made between a public and a private leader, the Florentines would always give the preference to a public one, that is to a magistrate elected by the citizens. At all events it is certain that, in Florence, where there is so great a love of equality, it would be impossible to establish a principality without making violent changes. And inasmuch as this would be not only a difficult but also an inhuman and cruel proceeding, it must be deemed unworthy by all desiring a reputation for mercy and goodness. I will therefore put aside all mention of a principality and will treat of a republic, the more that your Holiness is understood to be well disposed to the latter and only hesitating because you desire a government by which your authority may maintain its greatness in Florence and your friends be assured of safety. As it seems to me that I have thought of a fitting plan, I have sought to explain my idea to you, so that you may use it, if it have any value, and may also recognize thereby the quality of my devotion to yourself.*

* *Opere*, vol. iv. pp. 112, 113. Even from these words it is plain that Machiavelli had received no direct and special invitation from the Pope to write upon this matter, otherwise he would certainly have said at this point

In its general outline Machiavelli's idea was very simple ; it was that of founding a genuine republic, while leaving for the present the choice of magistrates in the hands of the Medici. Thus the latter would remain the actual masters for life ; but at their decease Florence would really regain her liberty. Nor was this a novel idea, for it was precisely the means, the trick, by which Cosimo and Lorenzo the Magnificent had made themselves sole masters of the Republic. It is true that in this way they had murdered liberty ; but now the Pope was at a distance, and neither he nor the Cardinal had any successor to think of ; they could not, or at least, according to Machiavelli, had no right to object, if liberty were to be veritably restored after their death. So, in short, it was only a question of trying to persuade the Medici that they would gain immortal glory if, while preserving their power in Florence for life, they would at once ensure the triumph of the Republic for the future. For the practical solution of this difficult problem, Machiavelli resorts in his *Discourses* to many contrivances rendering his proposals extremely complicated. At one moment he reverts to the old Florentine theory of the three ambitions, of the three classes of citizens that have to be satisfied : those, namely, who seek to hold the first rank and command ; those who are content with some sort of share in the government, and the masses only requiring freedom and justice. He wished to

that it was his duty to reply. There are other expressions, further on, indicating, as it seems to us, that the invitation had proceeded from the Cardinal.

suppress the whole complicated machinery of the old councils and magistracies, that the Medici, with veiled perfidy, had resuscitated from the statutes anterior to 1494 ; and he proposed instituting a Gonfaloniership with a Signory, Senate, and General Council. This was the form of government founded in 1494, in the time of Savonarola, and that, with slight alterations, had endured to 1512. It was, indeed, substantially the same as that suggested first by Guicciardini and then by Giannotti, although each had introduced different modifications.

Coming afterwards to the practical way of carrying out his suggested reforms, Machiavelli began by proposing the election for life of sixty-five citizens over the age of forty-five, one of whom was to be elected Gonfalonier for two or three years, or even for life. One-half of the remaining sixty-four were to form a species of council for the Gonfalonier, holding office for one year, and replaced at the end of the term by the other half, and so on in alternation. These thirty-two were to be again divided into groups of eight citizens each, who would compose the Signory proper for three months, under the presidency of the Gonfalonier. In this way the most restless ambition might be satisfied. Then came the Senate or Council of the Two Hundred, of which the members must be forty years old. Machiavelli likewise abolished many useless magistrates ; but retained the Eight of *Guardia and Balla*, forming a species of common court of justice, and the eight of *Pratica*, who were intrusted with war affairs and hence with the Militia Ordinance. This latter was ever the institution he had

most at heart. The Medici had abolished it in 1512, and then recalled it to temporary existence by a decree of the 19th May, 1514, under the name of Ordinance of the Territory * (*Ordinanza del Contado*).

Machiavelli would not dwell upon the subject at a moment when it was very awkward to speak of arming the people, but determined to recur to it later, after having succeeded in obtaining the re-establishment of

* This decree is to be found in the Florence Archives, *Basilc* (1512-26), No. 58; and according to the old classification: class xi. dist. 18, No. 19, at c. 157¹. He begins with the statement that the Gonfalonier and Signory of Florence deem it well to "make provision that the State may be long "preserved and rendered entirely secure against any injury and especially "against any sudden attack. That they believe this may be easily assured, "whenever their own people are well armed and organized, and no attempt "made to rely upon foreign arms and mercenaries." Therefore the militia is re-established; and it is decreed that ten thousand foot soldiers are to be enlisted under the flags of the territory and district (*contado e distretto*), and that their superintendence is to be entrusted to "the magistrate of the "respectable Ten of *Basilica*, and in case of that magistrate not being forthcoming, to the magistrate of the respectable Eight of *Pratica*." This provision was made because at that time it was already determined to suppress the Ten and replace them by the Eight of *Pratica*, who, in fact, entered office on the 10th June of the same year. The letters of the Ten come to an end on the 9th June, 1514, and the first two vols. of the letters of the *Otto di Pratica* (Nos. 28 and 29 according to the new classification, and according to the old: class x. dist. 5, Nos. 49 and 50) all bear the following title: "Alter ex libris litterarum intra Dominium scriptarum per magn^{os} "Octoviros Praticæ Reip. Flo^{re}, inceptus die X^{ma} junii mdxiiij, qua die "inceptit officium dicti Octoviratus, et est primus magistratus, etc." Lorenzo de' Medici, the Pope's nephew, was a member of the first Eight. The two vols. quoted run from 1514 to 1516 and complete each other. The first letter is of the 13th June, 1514. The decree quoted above was only partially and unwillingly carried out. In fact, the Medici always neglected the Militia Ordinance.

We must here mention that even Guicciardini spoke favourably of the Militia Ordinance in the *Discourses* from which we have previously quoted, and wished to see it enlarged and strengthened. *Opere inedite*, vol. xi.; *Discourse* iii. p. 264.

the Republic. For the present, therefore, he left the *Otto di Pratica* and the militia as they were, only suggesting that the latter should be divided into two bodies, to each of which should be attached a commissary nominated every two years by the Pope. And Pope and Cardinal were also, with the authority and charge of the whole Florentine people, to elect the Gonfalonier, the Signory, the Two Hundred, and all other magistrates. This was to be the means of giving all power into their hands during their life, in order that all might pass to the people, after their death.

But the last and most important part of the reform still remained to be considered, namely, that of satisfying the bulk of the citizens. "To this end," pursued Machiavelli, with rising animation, "it is necessary to re-open the hall of the Great Council." "Without satisfying the masses no stable republic has ever been established; and the mass of Florentine citizens will never be content until that hall is re-opened; therefore, in order to ground a republic in Florence, it is requisite to re-open this hall, and restore this privilege to the masses. And your Holiness may be assured that this would be the first thing done by any enemy wishing to deprive you of the State, and therefore it would be a wiser plan that its doors should be opened on safe terms by your own hand." *

Hence it was necessary that the Grand Council should be reconstituted on the usual plan, and composed of a thousand, or at the least, of six hundred, citizens. And

* *Opere*, vol. iv. p. 117.

there was no need to fix the mode of election, since all could sit in turn who were *beneficiati*, that is to say, citizens eligible for the government and therefore for seats in Council. The highest function of this body, besides that of sanctioning the laws, was the election of the magistrates; but these prerogatives were at present only allowed to it in a very limited degree, since they were to be retained by the Medici until both Pope and Cardinal ceased to live, and only then be restored to the people. It was also suggested by Machiavelli that the Medici should occasionally summon the Council to a wider or rather to the full exercise of its rights in order that the people might be gradually trained to liberty; and in this, indeed, lay the main gist of his *Discourse*.

"By these measures," so he said in conclusion, addressing Pope and Cardinal with ever-increasing fervour, "you become absolute lords of all. You nominate the chief magistrates, the Gonfalonier, the Signory, the Two Hundred; you legislate with the authority of the whole people; everything depends upon your will; nor, during your life, does this government in any way differ from a monarchy. At your death you bequeath to your country a genuine, free Republic, that will owe its existence to you." "I hold that the greatest honour to be attained by men, is that which is voluntarily conferred upon them by their country; I hold that the greatest good that can be accomplished and the most grateful to God, is that which is done to our country. Besides, no men win so much praise for their deeds as those who have

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"reformed republics and kingdoms by means of laws and
"institutions: these are the men who, next to the gods,
"have most been extolled. . . . Therefore, Heaven can
"grant no greater gift to mortal man, nor point out to
"him a more glorious path than this; and amid the
"many benefits God has conferred upon your house and
"upon the person of your Holiness, the greatest is this
"of giving you the strength and purpose to earn immor-
"tality, and in this way greatly to surpass your ancestral
"power and glory." *

Although this conclusion leads us back to Machiavelli's dominant idea, and recalls the final exhortation of the *Prince*, yet we cannot attribute any considerable scientific, nor indeed any great practical value to his *Discourse* as a whole. For, he either repeats in it ideas already expounded by him in greater detail elsewhere, or echoes without comment current doctrines of general acceptance in Florence. The form of republic proposed by him is identical in its main outline with that counselled by all at that period. As to the modifications he suggested for its improvement, his counsels are very inferior to the far more sagacious and practical advice written by Guicciardini from Spain in the first *Discourse* that we examined.†

The subtle contrivances by which Machiavelli sought to prepare the transition from present despotism to future liberty, were decidedly too subtle and crafty, as was later observed by Alessandro dei Pazzi when ques-

* *Opere*, vol. iv. pp. 121, 122.

† *Discourse* iii. in the *Opere inedite*, vol. ii. p. 262 and fol.

tioned in his turn by Cardinal de' Medici.* And had all these contrivances been adopted, they would scarcely have achieved the desired end. A republic placed entirely in the power of a Pope like Leo X. would either have led to immediate conflict, or would have increased the difficulty of really establishing freedom. Nevertheless, Machiavelli's *Discourse* is another proof of the sincerity, constancy, and depth of his attachment to liberty. After so earnestly desiring the favour of the Medici, in order to obtain some public employment at their hands, no sooner do they look upon him and ask his opinion than he is unable to do other than reiterate with irrepressible enthusiasm the simple exhortation that the supreme glory and fortune to be desired of mortals in this world consists in the might and determination to found a free, civilized, and powerful State. And he was so firmly persuaded of this, that he could not understand how others could fail to be instantly convinced likewise. This made him hopeful of inducing first Giuliano and then Lorenzo to become the saviour of Italy; this now made him hope to persuade Leo X. to lay the foundations of the future freedom of Florence. He was deceived in both cases, but nevertheless neither resigned his faith nor renounced his intention of renewing the attempt. At this moment the Pope attached no importance to proposals mainly

* Pazzi's *Discourse* was written in 1522, and is published in the *Archivio Storico*, vol. i. p. 420 and fol. The author considers the form of government proposed by Machiavelli to be "of a kind unusual to that city, and "extravagant." (Page 429.)

offered to him at the instigation of the Cardinal.* Thus both Pontiff and prelate made use of dissertations of this kind, and, directly and indirectly, frequently invited them, for the sole purpose of quieting the hottest lovers of liberty by throwing a sop to their hopes and illusions.

The Cardinal was now desirous to attract Machiavelli. He was already personally acquainted with him; and had begun to correspond with him and to grant him certain favours. Better times, therefore, seemed about to dawn upon the ex-secretary; but the signs were still so slight and the favours so small, that occasionally they brought him more humiliation than pleasure. In the year 1520 he was employed for the first time by the Signory and the Cardinal as Commissioner to Lucca, to arrange the affairs of certain Florentine traders holding a credit of sixteen hundred florins on one Michele Guinigi of that city, who refused payment. This was a private affair that might have been settled by the common tribunals, but complications had grown out of it requiring the intervention of the two governments. Guinigi had inherited a large fortune from his father; but, as it was known that he would speedily dissipate

* At the close of this *Discourse* Machiavelli seems to positively refer the Pope to information the Cardinal was to give him *viva voce*. He tells His Holiness that unless timely precautions be taken, the condition of Florence may at any moment expose the Medici to a thousand unexpected dangers, and in the meantime already causes them numerous vexations insupportable to any one; "and for these vexations His most reverend Eminence the Cardinal can vouch, as he has spent the past months in Florence." *Opere*, vol. iv. p. 122. This seems to additionally confirm the fact of the invitation having proceeded from the Cardinal. Besides, contemporary historians agree that it was he who interrogated the citizens and gave them to believe that the Pope had authorized him to do so.

it, the greater part had been entailed to his children. In fact, besides the debts contracted by him with Florentines and others in the course of his business, he had already lost large sums at the gambling-table, and was therefore unable to satisfy his creditors. Accordingly, permission was now asked of the Lucchese Republic for the affair to be placed in the hands of special arbitrators, authorized either to cancel the gambling debts or at least to put them aside, so as to give absolute precedence to the commercial obligations. In this case only would the kinsmen and guardians of Guinigi's children promise to be liable for the trade debts, and they would in no case consent to pay the sums lost at play. But these gambling debts having been attested in proper legal form, they could not be set aside without the intervention of the political arm. Unless this could be obtained the whole of Michele Guinigi's patrimony would be held in trust for his children who were minors, and their guardians would be legally authorized to refuse payment to the Florentine creditors. After prolonged negotiation, Machiavelli succeeded in persuading the General Council of Lucca to place the matter in the hands of the Praetor and three arbitrators who would examine the accounts. It could thus be ascertained which were *bonâ fide* contracts for justifiable debts, which fictitious, and on all doubtful points they could apply to the Elders of the Republic, who in their turn would again bring the matter before the General Council.*

* Several documents relating to this affair are included among the *Carte del Machiavelli*, case i. No. 60, and were published in the *Opere* (P. M.),

Being detained in Lucca several months by this business, Machiavelli as usual spent his time in studying his surroundings and taking notes of all that he saw. In fact, there has come down to us a *Summary of the affairs of the city of Lucca*,* that must have been written by him at this period. It is a hasty and somewhat incorrect sketch; but contains many apposite reflections. The Signory, he tells us, was composed of nine citizens and the Gonfalonier, who were changed every two months and were not eligible for re-election within two years. Then there was a council of thirty-six, renewed every six months; the citizens composing it during the first half year could not be re-elected for the second, but were eligible for the succeeding term. The General Council sat for a year, and consisted of seventy-two members,† elected by the Signory, and twelve other citizens nominated by the thirty-six and forbidden to sit two years in succession. The Signory exercised very great authority

vol. vi. pp. 267-276. These are: a petition from the Florentine merchants to the Signory of Lucca, undated; a second petition from the same, dated . . . September, 1520; a memorandum for Niccolò Machiavelli, by an unknown hand, giving him detailed information of the whole affair; a *note of things to be clearly remembered as to the transactions of Michele Guinigi*; finally the sentence of the General Council of Lucca. All these documents, excepting the third, are in Machiavelli's handwriting. In document vii. of Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, we subjoin a couple of letters from G. B. Bracci to Machiavelli, dated 14th August and 7th September, 1520, upon the same question, which complete the series of documents connected with this affair.

* *Opere*, vol. iv. pp. 124-133.

† This was his first mistake, for there were 90 and not 72 members, who with the substitutes, also mentioned by Machiavelli, formed a Council of 120. So at least it is stated by the Statute of 1446, still in vigour at that time.

over the territory, which, according to the republican custom of those times, enjoyed no political liberty ; but had very little power within the city, where it was only competent to convoke councils, and bring forward decrees prepared in the *Pratiche* or, as they were called at Lucca, *Colloquii* (conversations), in which the wisest citizens were invited to take part. The General Council constituted the real government of the city, for it had power to make laws and treaties, to pronounce sentence of death without appeal ; and its motions were carried by a majority of three-fourths of the votes. Nevertheless there was a Potestà exercising authority in civil and criminal suits.*

Machiavelli observes that this Lucca government worked well, although it had some defects. He approves of the Signory having but little authority over the citizens, "for such has always been the practice of good republics, inasmuch as the chief magistrate can easily abuse his power, if he be not held in check. Neither had the Roman Consuls, nor have the Doge and Signory of Venice any power over citizens' lives." Still, the Signory of Lucca lacked fitting dignity, according to Machiavelli ; "because the brief term of office and the numerous exclusions compelled the nomination of persons of small account. Thus it was continually necessary to recur in the *Colloquii* to the advice of private citizens,

* The printed edition gives the words *potestà fiorentino*, but this must certainly be a misprint for *potestà forestiero*. For Florentines and their subjects were always excluded in Lucca from every office that had to be held by foreigners.

the which is not customary in well-organized republics, wherein the greatest number distributes office, the medium number gives advice, the minority executes." Such indeed was then considered the fundamental rule and necessary basis of every regular government, there being no exact idea at that time of the modern division of power. Accordingly, Machiavelli went on to say : "Thus did the people, Senate, and Consuls of Rome ; thus now do in Venice the Grand Council, the Pregadi, the Signory. But at Lucca, on the contrary, these orders are confused, for the medium number, that is the Council of Thirty-six, distributes office ; the Seventy-two and the Signory are partly advisers and partly executants of the law. Yet in practice even this leads to little mischief, for the same reason mentioned above, namely, that the magistrates are slightly considered on account of their lack of dignity, and rich men chiefly concern themselves with their own private affairs. Nevertheless, this order of things is not to be recommended." He then proceeds to approve of the General Council's power of life and death over the citizens, because, in his opinion, such power is a great check on the ambition of persons of importance, who would never be condemned by a small tribunal. Still, he would prefer that, as in Florence, there should be a bench of four or six magistrates, to decide the smaller civil and criminal disputes of the citizens, leaving to the Potestà the charge of political trials and of all others devolved upon him by the Statutes.

"Unless some such magistrature be established," he

said, "the smaller suits of daily occurrence will be always neglected, much to the harm and peril of liberty. In fact, even at Lucca it has been found necessary to pass a special law, known as the Scapegrace law, by which in September and March the Councils jointly decree the expulsion from the State for three years of a certain number of the most dangerous young men. This generally served as a check, but nevertheless proved useless against the insolence of the Poggio family, which was more alarming than any other." This short summary, as may easily be seen, is of no great value ; but it proves Machiavelli's constant habit of seizing every opportunity of studying the institutions and political machinery of other States, whether near or distant, and of trying to discover and suggest means for their improvement.

But these studies did not fill up much of his time, and he was therefore obliged to seek additional employment. He received various letters at this period, and among them one from Cardinal de' Medici, dated the last day of July, and beginning with the words : *Spectabilis vir, amice mi carissime*. In this he was desired to obtain the expulsion from Lucca of three students of the Pisan University, who had been already expelled thence for bad conduct.* His friends of the Oricellarii Gardens some-

* This letter is given twice in different shapes in the *Opere* (P. M.). At p. 88 of vol. i. it is printed pretty correctly, excepting as to the date ; *Ex Florentia ultima junii MDXXX.*, which is incorrect. In vol. vi., at p. 210, the date is correctly given : *Ex Palatio florentino* (although the original has it : *Ex Florentia*) *ultima julii MDXX.*, but the letter contains several mistakes. And it is also an error to say that it is to be found in the *Carte del Machiavelli*, case v. No. 51, for it is in No. 41, as noted in vol. i.

times sent him serious and sometimes facetious letters praying for his speedy return, and his children urged this still more warmly both in their own name and that of their mother, Marietta.* But Machiavelli was unable to leave until the affair in his charge had been brought to some conclusion, and accordingly profited by his leisure at Lucca to compose his short and well-known work, entitled, the *Life of Castruccio Castracani*. On the 29th August he sent this book to his friend Zanobi Buondelmonti, having dedicated it to him and to Luigi Alamanni *suoi amicissimi*. And as early as the 6th September Buondelmonti replied that he had received and read it with Alamanni and other friends, who were all very much pleased with it.†

It is a well-known fact that this, like his other works, gave rise to much doubt and dispute. By some it was styled a romance, by others an imitation of Xenophon's *Cyropoedia*, and so on. It certainly is not history, as may be ascertained by all who care to compare it with any narrative of the best known authentic facts. The author composed the biography of an imaginary personage, to whom he gave the name of Castruccio Castracani, and filled it partly with incidents from the latter's life, as related in history, and partly with those derived from

* *Vide* Italian edition, documents viii. and ix. of Appendix (III.), where we give a letter dated 30th July, from Bernardo Machiavelli to his father at Lucca, and another to the same from Filippo dei Nerli, dated 1st August, 1520. Several others of the same period were published in the *Opere* (P. M.).

† Buondelmonti's letter is among the *Carte del Machiavelli*, case v. No. 43, and was published in the *Opere* (P. M.), vol. i. p. lxxvii.

the life of Agathocles in books xix. and xx. of Diodorus Siculus, with the addition of sundry particulars of his own invention. The real Castruccio was a legitimate scion of the noble family of the Antelminelli; he was born in 1281, and early went into banishment with his father Geri, at Ancona. On the death of his parents, he went to the wars in Flanders, together with Alberto Scotti and Musciatto Franzesi in the service of Philip the Beautiful. In 1310 he was fighting in Lombardy on the side of the Visconti.

Machiavelli's narrative, on the contrary, begins by asserting that extraordinary men are nearly always of low and obscure birth, because destiny likes to show its might in this way; and then he goes on to relate how a certain Canon Castracani and his sister Dianora, who lived with him, found a forsaken baby in their garden and brought it up in their own house, and that this child was the famous Castruccio. Showing an aptitude for arms, he was trained by Messer Francesco Guinigi, and taken by him to the Lombard wars, where from the age of eighteen he began to be distinguished for his valour. Now this Canon and his sister are wholly fictitious personages, and equally fictitious is the fable of the founding discovered in the garden. Besides, the real Castruccio was away from Italy at the age of eighteen; nor is there any Francesco Guinigi that could have played the part narrated by Machiavelli. But, according to Diodorus Siculus, Agathocles was abandoned by his father. His mother found him after some days, and carried him to her brother, by whom he was reared. Later, Agathocles

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found a protector in a nobleman, who gave him a post in the army, in which he quickly gained distinction by his valour.

Machiavelli continues to relate how, directly after Castruccio's return to Lucca from Lombardy, Messer Francesco Guinigi died, and, leaving a son of thirteen named Paolo, chose Castruccio as the boy's guardian and governor of his estates. Paolo, like his father, and indeed the whole episode, is an imaginary figure borrowed from Diodorus, who narrates that Agathocles married the widow of his protector, and thus exchanged poverty for wealth. The method by which Castruccio, little by little, and first with the aid of Uguccone della Faggiuola, lord of Pisa, and then in opposition to his will, succeeded in becoming tyrant of Lucca, is recounted by Machiavelli with greater truthfulness. But the battle of Montecatini, where the Florentines were defeated, and Castruccio fought so valiantly under the banner of Uguccone that the latter's jealousy was aroused and his friendship turned to enmity, is described in very arbitrary fashion. Machiavelli makes Uguccone fall ill—although, on the contrary, he was at the head of the army—in order to give the command to Castruccio, and attributes to him, in his usual way, a wholly imaginary plan of battle. And after Castruccio has become lord of Lucca, and head of the Tuscan Ghibellines through the death of Uguccone, there follows a narrative of the stratagems by which he suppressed a rebellion in that city.

Here again Machiavelli imitates Diodorus, by attri-

buting to his hero the same conduct pursued by Agathocles in extinguishing his enemies, and so often mentioned and recommended by himself in the pages of the *Prince* and the *Discourses*. According to Diodorus Siculus, Agathocles, having first, as captain of the Syracusans, collected a great army, then summoned the heads of the Council of Six Hundred, under pretext of asking their advice, and put them all to death. He then roused the people against the nobles they hated, and thus about four thousand persons were massacred. According to Machiavelli, Stefano di Poggio first joined the rebels in Lucca, then quieted them, so that on Castruccio's return from the camp, he presented himself to him, showed him that all was tranquil, thanks to his efforts, and spoke in favour of his friends and relations. Castruccio gave him a kindly welcome, and invited him to bring his friends with him. But when they came before him, confiding in his pledged word, all were seized and put to death, after which he likewise slaughtered many others who seemed likely to aspire to the highest rank, and thus at last was safely established as lord of Lucca.*

Even the narrative of the means by which Castruccio gained possession of Pistoia, is entirely fictitious. According to Machiavelli, the tyrant came to terms with the leaders of the two factions dividing the city, making both believe that he would march in on a certain night to oppose their adversaries. But when the moment came, at a given signal, he attacked both parties, van-

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 413.

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quished them and had them all put to death. The city was then summoned to yield in Castruccio's name, and surrendered to him together with the outlying territory, "so that," says Machiavelli in conclusion, "every one, being full of hope, and chiefly stirred by his *virtue*, subsided into quiet."* There is not a word of truth in this account. Pistoia was surrendered by Filippo Tedici, chief of the city. Finding himself too weak to resist Castruccio, the Florentines, and his enemies within the walls, all at the same time, he tricked the second and gave himself up to the first, who appointed him his captain and gave him his daughter to wife. Such, at least, is the version narrated in the far more credible *Storie Pistoiesi*. Among other things, Machiavelli assigns neither wife nor children to Castruccio, although he was not only married, but the father of a family.

The capture of Pistoia was actually succeeded by two battles, forming the most important events of Castruccio's military career. The first and chief was that of Altopascio (1325), in which the Florentines were completely defeated. Yet Machiavelli, who has given a minute account of this battle in his *Histories*, says no word of it here. After several other military enterprises Castruccio, now Duke of Lucca, Volterra, Pistoia, etc., Imperial Vicar at Pisa, found himself in Rome, whither he had gone with Louis the Bavarian. Here he learnt that the Florentines had retaken Pistoia. Hastening to Lucca, he collected an army, besieged Pistoia, and at the same time defeated the Florentines who tried to rescue the

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 414.

city. Yet Machiavelli has nothing to say of this campaign, the second in importance in Castruccio's real life, and narrates sham battles instead. According to him, Castruccio, having led his army from Lucca, encountered the Florentines at Serravalle, and he gives a most minute description of a battle that never took place there, and in which Castruccio is supposed to have proved the splendour of his military genius by routing the enemy. Thus again master of Pistoia, he hurried towards Pisa, where a conspiracy had broken out. On the way he met the Florentines, who fell upon him with a very numerous army at Fucecchio, and then we are treated to a most detailed description of another imaginary battle, in which Castruccio's genius is again resplendent, and again the Florentines are beaten. These two narratives, which, by the way, are contradicted by Machiavelli's own *Histories*, serve to show us even more clearly than elsewhere that his *Vita di Castruccio* was intended for a miniature politico-military romance, and written to prove, among other things, the great superiority in warfare of infantry *versus* cavalry. This was always Machiavelli's favourite theory, and it was also a correct one. He had long before alluded to it in the *Discourses*, and had recently enlarged upon it, and given its theoretical demonstration in the *Art of War*, as we shall soon have occasion to see. In the *Life of Castruccio* he tried to bring it within general comprehension by illustrating it with imaginary examples, to which, for the sake of greater effect, he gave an historical colouring.

Meanwhile, Fortune, the everlasting ruler of human

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events—thus continues Machiavelli—after having so far favoured Castruccio, now determined, the better to prove her power, to bring his life to a sudden end by a fever that struck him down after the last of his glorious battles. Feeling the approach of death, he sent for his hypothetical successor and addressed him in the following terms: "Had I foreseen that fate would check my course half way, I would have bequeathed thee a smaller State and fewer enemies. But fate is arbiter in all things, and has neither granted me sufficient judgment to foresee her will, nor sufficient time to overcome it. I abstained from marriage in order to show gratitude to the race of thy father, who was my protector. It is now thy part to try to maintain the kingdom that I leave thee and that I acquired by force of arms." Paolo had neither the valour nor good fortune of Castruccio, and speedily forfeited his kingdom. So runs Machiavelli's tale; but all this, too, is pure romance, for, as we have already said, Castruccio left several sons, who held the State, although it was not long before they lost it, as neither the paternal sagacity nor valour was included in their inheritance.* This singular biography, that

* For Castruccio's life, the following are the authorities to be consulted: *Vita Castruccii Antelminelli lucensis ducis, auctore Nicalao Tegrino una cum etrusca versione Georgii Dati*, Lucae, 1742; *Le attioni di Castruccio Castracani degli Antelminelli, Signore di Lucca*, etc., Roma, Gigliucci; Pignotti, *Storia della Toscana*, libro iii. at conclusion. Signor F. L. Polidori included an *Esame critico della vita di Castruccio Castracani* in his edition of the *Opere minori* of Machiavelli (Florence, Le Monnier, 1852), *vide* page 33 and fol. In this study, the author notes the historical blunders contained in Machiavelli's work, and to which other writers had long before begun to call attention. Many had observed that in this work Machiavelli had borrowed from the ancients. But we believe that Signor

begins and ends by extolling the omnipotence of fate, winds up with a series of memorable sayings attributed to Castruccio. It was believed by many writers that these were nearly all derived from the Apothegms of Plutarch; but it has been recently proved that a considerable number of them are borrowed from the Life of Aristippus of Diogenes Laertius.*

From all that we have said, it seems to us that Machiavelli's object in writing this work is sufficiently plain. Being in Lucca, it was only in accordance with his usual habit that he should study the history of that State, and his attention was naturally drawn to the character and career of Castruccio, the daring soldier and acute politician, who was the founder of a new State, and a personage of the stamp of a Cæsar Borgia. Just as this latter, in passing through the crucible of Machiavelli's fancy, had been transmuted into his political ideal, so too, Castruccio, still more easily transformed because viewed from a greater distance, became his politico-military ideal. Making him almost the imaginary hero of a singular historical romance, he

C. Triantafillis was the first to prove that the narrative was partly derived from the life of Agathocles related by Diodorus Siculus. Vide *Sulla vita di Castruccio Castracani scritta da Niccolò Machiavelli, ricerche* by C. Triantafillis. This work was first published in the *Archivio Veneto*, tom. x. part i., 1875; and afterwards as a separate pamphlet (Venice, Commercio Press, 1875).

* Sig. Menagio, of the Fabricio Library, had declared that the memorable sayings attributed by Machiavelli to Castruccio were extracted from Plutarch's Apothegms; but Signor Triantafillis has quoted eleven that are clearly copied from the life of Aristippus of Diogenes Laertius, an author who—as it may be well to observe—had been already translated in the fifteenth century by Traversari.

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sought in him the personification of certain of the ideas expressed in the *Prince* and the *Discourses*, and even more of the theories he had recently expounded in the *Art of War*. When the real history of Castruccio was insufficient, he reverted to that of Agathocles, and everything lacking in this was supplied by his own imagination, which in short served to arrange and combine every detail to his own liking. It is very probable, that, as many have asserted, the Cyropoedia of Xenophon first suggested the composition of this work. In fact, Machiavelli, when alluding to it in his *Discourses*,* says, that Xenophon wrote it in order to show what were the qualities possessed by and almost always essential to the success of conquering princes. But at all events, it is certain that the Cyropoedia could only furnish general suggestions as to the nature and method of the work. As regards its main substance, its purpose and its precepts, the *Life of Castruccio* entirely appertains to Machiavelli and his times.

But it is not surprising that a work composed under similar conditions and for similar ends should have given rise to many disputes. Doubts and conjectures, in fact, were started from the first moment of its appearance and are still unended. In the letter of Zanobi Buondelmonti mentioned above, the writer spoke of the pleasure with which he and many other comrades of the Oricellarii

* *Discorsi*, book ii. chap. xiii. p. 222. "Xenophon, in his life of "Cyrus, shows the needfulness of deceit, considering that he makes the "first expedition of Cyrus against the king of Armenia to be full of fraud, "and shows that his hero occupied that kingdom by stratagem and not by "force of arms."

Gardens had perused the new work, and encouraged Machiavelli to persevere in historical writing, "because "in this your style is more elevated than in treating of "other subjects." But while all were agreed on that point, "every one hesitated and doubted as to the "history itself and as to the explanation of your meaning "and conceptions." Buondelmonti also remarked, and not without justice, that the sayings assigned to Castruccio seemed too numerous, the more especially as some of them had been already "attributed to other "ancient and modern sages." *

And truly Machiavelli's narrative proceeds with a rapid swing and has an attractive limpidity and freshness of style, and these were gifts that never failed him when he was dealing with the personification of his ideals. But only when we have formed a clear conception of those ideals, is it possible for us to understand how the *Life of Castruccio Castracani* took shape in his mind, or to perceive how simple and natural was his object in writing it.

* *Vide* letter in the *Opere* (P. M.), vol. i. p. lxxxvii.

CHAPTER VII.

The "Art of War."

WE have already noted that it was during these years in Florence that Machiavelli wrote the seven books of the *Art of War*. They were dedicated to Lorenzo di Fillipo Strozzi, who had introduced the author to the Medici family, and are in the form of dialogues supposed to be held in the Oricellarii Gardens between Cosimo Rucellai, Fabrizio Colonna, Zanobi Buondelmonti, Battista della Palla, and Luigi Alamanni, during the year 1516, after Colonna's return to Florence at the close of the Lombard war. Nevertheless, it is clear that this work was written some years later, for in the opening pages the author speaks of the death of Cosimo Rucellai, which certainly did not take place before 1519.* The book was probably finished in 1520. In fact, on the 17th November of that year, Filippo dei Nerli, in writing to Machiavelli, tells him that he has not yet received either the *Life of Castruccio*, or the work *De re militari*,

* Passerini, in his *Genealogia e Storia della famiglia Rucellai* (Florence, Cellini, 1861), states that Cosimo was born in 1495 and died about 1520. But in his *Curiosità storico-artistiche*, both at pp. 69 and 71, he gives the year 1519 as the date of his death.

and makes special complaint of not possessing the latter, because Cardinal de' Medici also wished to read it.* The *Art of War*, at all events, was already published in Florence by the 16th August, 1521.†

In the same way that the *Prince* is only an amplification of certain ideas already sketched out in the *Dis-*

* *Opere* (P. M.), vol. i. p. lxxxvi. It is true that the title *De re militari* might also apply to Vegezio's work of that name. But its being mentioned together with the *Vita di Castruccio*, makes us believe it to have been Machiavelli's *Arte della Guerra*; nor is it likely that Cardinal de' Medici would have been obliged to apply to Machiavelli in order to obtain the work of Vegezio.

† Gamba erroneously supposes this edition to be identical with that of 1529. Both were in the Palatine and are now in the National Library of Florence. At the end of the first is the inscription: "Impresso in Firenze per li Heredi di Philipppo di Giunta, nelli anni del Signore MDXXI. a di xvi d'Agosto, Leone X. pontefice." Vide *Il Quarto Centenario di Niccolò Machiavelli*.

Codex 1451, cl. viii., in the Florence National Library, contains long fragments of the *Arte della Guerra* in Machiavelli's handwriting. There were 183 sheets, but now several are missing, and those remaining are not in order. They go from Nos. 7 to 16, from 97 to 110, from 113 to 154, from 161 to 166, from 169 to 183. The first sheet, No. 7, begins: "Cosimo. Basterebbe quando io fossi certo, che la occasione." Sheet 176 contains the conclusion of the work. The sheets from 177 to 183 contain the tables, preceded by an explanatory notice to the reader. Then follow two double sheets, unnumbered, containing the author's additions and corrections. Included among these fragments is a separate sheet, certainly of Machiavelli's time but not in his hand, containing the Greek alphabet with explanations in Latin. It seems sufficiently clear that as Machiavelli found it necessary to use many different signs when compiling his tables, in order to indicate the disposition of the various portions of his army, and as the Latin letters did not suffice, he must have applied to a friend for the Greek alphabet, with which he himself was imperfectly acquainted. Accordingly, his friend forwarded him the alphabet in his own hand, and added explanations of the vowels, consonants, diphthongs, etc. Such at least would seem to be the only plausible explanation of the existence of this sheet in a strange hand among the autograph remains of the *Art of War*, in which the author makes frequent use of the letters of the Greek alphabet.

courses, so the *Art of War* explains in detail all that was briefly mentioned in the same regarding the method of disciplining armies and leading them into action. These three works, in short, being all governed by the same conception, might easily be fused into one. The *Discourses*, containing the germs of both the others, and therefore the entire political system of the author, chiefly treat of the means of establishing the liberty of the State ; the *Prince* of the mode of founding a new and absolute monarchy, in order later to obtain by its aid the unity and independence of the whole country ; while the *Art of War* teaches how the nation should be prepared for the defence of liberty and independence. And in all three works, even when treating the question theoretically and in general terms, Machiavelli always keeps Italy specially in view. Hence all these writings of his have, not only a scientific merit, but also a practical and historic value that greatly increases the difficulty of pronouncing judgment on them. Other and stouter obstacles have to be encountered in entering on an accurate critical study of the *Art of War*. Even military men can scarcely estimate the historic value of a work that is incomprehensible if regarded apart from its time, and it is impossible for civilians to fix the measure of intrinsic and technical worth that it undoubtedly possesses. Nor are these difficulties lessened by the fact of Machiavelli never having been a practical tactician. For this neither aids our judgment of the real value of his military theories, nor renders it easier to ascertain what were his blunders, nor which of them were derived from

his inexperience, which from his times. In his day fire-arms had not as yet produced the revolution in army organization that afterwards led to an altered mode of warfare and to the creation of modern tactics. Indeed, the science of tactics was as yet unknown and unimagined. Machiavelli was the first to venture to attempt it, thereby showing an audacity equal to that which incited him to found a science of statecraft.

How far did he succeed in his attempt? This is the question to which we are bound to reply ; and it is excessively difficult to do so, especially when quite unversed in military science. We shall therefore consult more competent judges, and profit by the counsels and suggestions of the military men to whose aid we have frequently had to recur in the course of this chapter.*

* Two writers in particular have favoured us with special advice : first, Herr Max Jähns, a well-known writer on military topics, a Major on the Prussian Staff, author of the work entitled : *Geschichte des Kriegswesens von der Urzeit bis zur Renaissance*, and who in 1876 published an essay on *Machiavelli und der Gedanke der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht* (vide *Kölnische Zeitung*, August, 1877, Nos. 108, 110, 112, and 115). By means of our friend, Professor Karl Hillebrand, we addressed a few questions to this gentleman. And the Major had the great kindness to furnish us with the fullest reply by forwarding a manuscript entitled : *Machiavelli als militärischer Techniker*, since published in *Die Grenzboten für Politik, Literatur und Kunst*, No. xiii. (24th March, 1881), Leipsic. We take this opportunity of expressing our deepest gratitude to the kind and learned author.

We have also repeatedly applied to Major Valentino Chiala, an Italian Staff officer, and it is impossible to speak too highly of his unfailing kindness in replying to the numerous questions we have addressed to him during the last two years. We will only state that, but for his ready and valuable advice, we might frequently have gone astray in our examination of Machiavelli's *Arte della Guerra*. But, fortunately for our country, it is a well-known fact that the officers of the Italian army unite to the manliest qualities the most exquisite kindness and courtesy.

Having no personal acquaintance with either of our two correspondents,

However, Machiavelli's essay fortunately includes certain fundamental and general ideas of great politico-military value, which can be explained and appreciated without any technical equipment. Accordingly, we will turn to these before undertaking a closer examination of the work.

The art of war, as indeed everything else in Europe, was then undergoing a great and rapid transformation. During the Middle Ages, men-at-arms with horses iron-clad, like themselves, from head to foot, had shown how easily they could overthrow foot-soldiers by the thrust of their prodigious spears ; infantry, therefore, had fallen into discredit, and heavy cavalry was the chief strength of every armed force. Accordingly, the mercenary bands by which Italy was overrun were principally composed of these mounted men-at-arms, and little attention was paid to the militia bands of the old Communes, formed of artisans, who fought on foot and had neither time nor money for training in the harder manœuvres of mounted troops. However, in the fifteenth century the foot-soldiers of Switzerland marched down from their mountains in defence of their own liberty. And as these men, massed in numerous and compact battalions, with simple breastplates for their sole body-armour, and equipped with enormously long pikes, which they rested

we were ignorant at the time that both the German and the Italian officer entertained the greatest admiration and esteem for Machiavelli's *Art of War*, even when judging it from a military and technical point of view. And as Major Chiala has never published the critical remarks with which he has favoured us, we have given quotations from them in the notes, headed : Major Chiala's remarks. This, we trust, will give no offence to the modesty that accompanies his learning.

on the ground and pointed at the enemy, fought with the utmost valour against Austria and the Dukes of Burgundy, they proved that infantry could not only withstand, but even overcome the strongest cavalry. Thus at the same time they won their own independence and the reputation of being the best soldiery in the world, and it was henceforth believed that no victory could be gained without the help of a good number of Swiss. The first to imitate them were the German Landsknechts, next the Spanish infantry, and both with great success. Thus, little by little, the chief strength of an army came to consist in the infantry; the Free Companies, whose extinction for many other reasons was only a question of time, began to lose their power and prestige, and even the much lauded men-at-arms of the French were no longer deemed invincible against foot-soldiers.

Machiavelli gained some knowledge on these points from his earliest experience of military matters at the camp before Pisa, and became more and more convinced of them during his subsequent travels in Switzerland and Tirol. And he gave prolonged study to the question. In fact, the fundamental idea of his *Art of War* is that the best militia is to be formed by arming the people, that at all periods the infantry forms the backbone of an army, and therefore the greatest care should be given to its organization and discipline. It is possible, he says, that in countries where, as in certain tracts of Asia, there are immense plains with a nomad population, cavalry may play the chief part in war; but in Europe,

mounted troops, though useful in skirmishes, reconnaissances, in supporting the infantry at need, and pursuing the beaten enemy, can never decide the fate of a battle. And this he asserts and repeats with so much decision and firmness, that leading military writers declare his expressions to be precisely those of a modern tactician.*

Starting with this idea, Machiavelli's admiration for the Romans naturally led him to consult the pages of Titus Livy, and still more of Vegetius, on the organization, constitution and discipline of their infantry, and was soon persuaded that the Roman legion was not only a model for imitation, but one not easily to be surpassed. And he was not mistaken in this belief. For many centuries later the legion remained the study and admiration of all great army reformers. For putting aside for a moment the radical changes introduced by firearms into modern tactics, the Roman legion is even now a model that has never been excelled, and from which much may still be learnt.

Combining with his Roman studies his personal experience of Swiss infantry, the results of repeated observation of German infantry during his travels, and all that he had recently heard of the Spanish, Machiavelli began to plan a model infantry corps, and thus hit upon the idea of his Militia Ordinance which he was

* Major Jähns writes thus: "Wenn man diese Sätze liest, so glaubt man einen Theoretiker aus unsern eignen Tagen zu hören." Jähns, *Machiavelli als militärischer Techniker*, in the above quoted number of *Die Grenzboten*, p. 555. The author alludes to Machiavelli's remarks upon cavalry in the *Discorsi* (bk. ii. chap. xviii. ; *Opere*, vol. iii. p. 244), and in the *Arte della Guerra* (bk. ii. ; *Opere*, vol. iv. p. 239).

continually striving to perfect in theory. And this conception of a novel infantry system was joined to another of greater importance, from which, indeed, it was derived, and which had also been suggested to him by Roman and Swiss examples ; namely, the conception, that forms the chief aim of his book, and one of the most constant objects of his whole life ; that the armed nation is the only national and invincible army, the true military strength of the modern State. It is not without reason that some writers have styled this idea prophetic, for although actually a discovery of the Romans, it has only attained triumph in our own days in the Prussian military system now more or less imitated throughout Europe.* Thus Machiavelli's conceptions, the political as well as the military, are fused into one in his *Art of War* ; and if the originality of the former is patent to all, so, too, the technical reforms he proposed for the improvement of the infantry of his day have repeatedly received the approbation and applause of modern tacticians.

* In the previously quoted letter, *Machiavelli und der Gedanke der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht*, Major Jähns starts by begging his readers to put aside the virtuous indignation usually aroused by the name of Machiavelli, since "nicht von der sittlichen Haltung des Mannes will ich reden, sondern "ich will ihn bezeichnen als den ersten modernen Menschen, dem der "Gedanke der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht zum Gegenstande wissenschaftlicher Erwägung wurde." And he afterwards adds that to Machiavelli's recognized claim to the title of creator of political science might well be added the same title with regard to military knowledge. "Dies gilt auch "von den militär-politischen Ideen Machiavelli's. Sie zeichnen ihn als einen "die Zeitgenossen hoch überragenden Geist, welcher die schweren Gebrechen des damaligen Kriegswesens erkannte und die Mittel angab sie "zu heilen." *Vide commencement of the letter published in the Kölnische Zeitung.*

We have already said that Machiavelli was not a practical soldier, and this is frankly admitted by him in the earliest pages of his work. This fact naturally enhances the merit of the truths he discovered, and is an added proof of the loftiness of his intellect ; but it also betrays him into occasional errors. And it is now time to turn our attention to one of these errors, inasmuch as its consequences partially influence the general character of the work. Machiavelli had very little faith in firearms. He had already said in the *Discourses* that although artillery might be effective against the walls of a fortress or against an army on the defensive in enclosed places, yet it was of little use in the field, or against an attacking force, and that war might be said to consist far more of attack than of defence,* as the Romans had shown us by their example. Nor did he by any means alter this opinion in the *Art of War*, where, although making very valuable remarks on the manner of employing artillery in the attack and defence of strongholds, he sometimes goes so far as to say that, in the open field, cannon produce little besides smoke. And as to portable firearms, he makes so little account of them, that more than once we plainly perceive that he would be ready to abolish them altogether, but for his fear of showing too great hostility to what he considers the prejudices of his time. Nevertheless, it is requisite to clearly determine the nature and motives of Machiavelli's blunder, as it is called, in order not to magnify it to an unjust degree. Portable firearms were so imperfect in his day, so difficult

* *Discorsi*, bk. ii. chap. xvii.

to use with any speed or profit, that they could not as yet satisfactorily supersede the bow and crossbow. In fact, not only were archers and crossbowmen still employed in all the battles of that century, but more than a hundred years later we find Montecuccoli suggesting that only two-thirds of the infantry should be armed with muskets and the remainder with pikes, which were not relinquished until the invention of bayonets in the eighteenth century.* And the difficulty of introducing entirely novel modes of warfare has been experienced in our own days with regard to the needle gun.

This weapon had been adopted by the Prussians as early as 1840 ; its efficacy had been firmly established during the war with Denmark, in 1864, and nevertheless Austria only made preparatory trials of it, and had not yet adopted it in the war of 1866. The colossal disaster of Sadowa was required to secure its introduction into the armies of Europe. How great, therefore, must have been the obstacles encountered by the first portable fire-arms, that, with all their early imperfections, seemed only fitted to upset the best traditions of warfare, the whole military tactics of the most renowned armies !

But as regards artillery it is a very different question, and these remarks cannot entirely exonerate Machiavelli on that score. At the battle of Ravenna (1512), the then celebrated field pieces of Alfonso d'Este made great havoc among the enemy ; at Novara (1513), the Swiss lost a great number of men, who, to use Giovio's expression, had been *torn by the artillery* ; at Marignano (1515), the

* Major Chiala insists strongly upon this point in his "*Remarks.*"

French guns helped to decide the fate of the day, and made enormous gaps in the serried ranks of the Swiss. Indeed, from that moment the latter's infantry began to lose their prestige of invincibility.* Now Machiavelli's *Art of War* was written after the battle of Marignano, where likewise the musketeers had their first opportunity of proving the efficacy of their weapons, an efficacy which was still better demonstrated at Pavia in 1525.

The real cause of Machiavelli's disregard for firearms must also be sought in the narrowness of his military experience at the camp before Pisa and in organizing the Florentine militia. It is true that he had enjoyed a near view of the Swiss and German infantry ; but only at hurried moments and several years earlier than 1512. At the time of the battle of Ravenna, he was entirely absorbed in preparing for the defence of Prato and Florence ; the battles of Novara and Marignano occurred later, when he was removed from his sphere of activity and living in his country retirement, where only a distant echo of these events reached him through political and literary friends. Consequently, Machiavelli understood soldiers and their weapons as they were previously to 1512 ; and it was these that he tried to bring to perfection by examining the conditions under which he

* Major Jähns remarks *à propos* of Machiavelli's contempt for artillery : " Diese Nichtachtung war nach dem Erfolge von Ravenna ein Anachronismus." *Machiavelli als militärischer Techniker* in *Die Grenzboten*, the number before quoted, p. 556. Major Chiala holds that at the battle of Ravenna the artillery had not yet shown all its capability, and is more indulgent, therefore, towards Machiavelli. But he adds that after the battle of Marignano, Machiavelli's blunder became far less excusable.

knew them and by studying the art of war as practised by the Romans. Had he been actually a military man, he would certainly have had better opportunities of gaining accurate knowledge of the great battles that took place in his time, and would perhaps have had a clearer presentiment of the future reserved for firearms. Spear and pike, sword and bow, are weapons too simple to be susceptible of great improvement, so that they are little different in modern times from what they were in the ancient; but firearms, being infinitely more complicated, were naturally capable of enormous improvements, of which the importance might have been foreseen, but of which it was impossible to calculate the extent. Certainly Machiavelli had no opportunities for calculations of this kind, and therefore in judging the value of his military theories, we have to remember the conditions in which they were elaborated and expounded.

At any rate, he was the first who tried to formulate a logical and scientific theory of the tactics used in the wars of his day, and of the improvements that might be made in them. His suggestions are based upon that which may be called the fundamental and normal branches of the military art, and on that account possess an undeniable value truly marvellous on the part of a man who was never a soldier.* But for the great progress of firearms

* Upon this point Major Chiala writes: "After reading the seven books of *the Arte della Guerra*, it is impossible to deny that on everything relating to the unchangeable portion of the art, Machiavelli writes with so much lucidity and soundness of sense, that even those but slightly acquainted with the conditions of the art of war in those days, are obliged, not only to recognize his superiority of intellect, but also a by no means superficial

and the radical changes and modifications thus brought about, even those portions of Machiavelli's book that are now only interesting from the historical point of view would be equally remarkable for their practical value. For he unhesitatingly indicated the only possible road to progress, without the intervention of an element so subversive of the old tactics. Yet, as it stands, this book serves to prove, according to the verdict of the best experts, that the founder of the science of politics is also "the first of modern classics on military subjects." *

In the dedication to Lorenzo Strozzi, one of his friends and protectors, Machiavelli at once enters on a very clear exposition of the leading political idea, and principal object of his book. "It has been a fatal error in Italy," he says, "to have separated civil from military

"experience of military matters. Certainly no simply theoretical writer "has ever written in this fashion." And at another passage: "The book "of the *Arte della Guerra* seems to me to be a real marvel, not only for its "time, but in the fullest sense of the word."

* Such is the opinion repeatedly expressed by Major Jähns, who terminates his essay, "*Machiavelli als Militärischer Techniker*," by a verdict not very unlike that already quoted by us, from the beginning of his letter on Machiavelli: "Alles in Allem genommen, erkennt man, dass "Machiavelli, der durch seine begeisterte Verkündigung des Gedankens "der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht als ein wahrhaft prophetischen Geist und "als einer der wichtigsten Denker auf dem Gebiete des Militärischen Ver- "fassungslbens erscheint, auch das Wesen der kriegerischen Technik in "einer für seine Zeit gang ungewöhnlichen Deutlichkeit durchschaute, und "es ist ein neuer, ich möchte sagen psychologischer Beweis für die Nähe "Verwandschaft von Kriegskunst und Staatskunst, dass *der Begründer des "modernen Staatsrecht zugleich der erste moderne militärische Klassiker ist.*" Before this essay was published, Major Chiala repeatedly expressed the same idea, and added these words: "Come nella parte politica ed organica "delle milizie, le vedute del Machiavelli furono ispirate ai veri principii "dell' arte della guerra, così anche nel campo tecnico per lui più difficile."

life, converting the latter into a trade as it is carried on by the Free Companies. In this way the soldier becomes violent, threatening, corrupt, the enemy of all quiet life. It behoves us therefore to revert to the old systems of the Romans, who recognized no difference between the citizen and the soldier, and maintained that of the two the latter should show himself the more faithful, pacific and God-fearing. For truly from whom need we demand more faith, more honesty and virtue, than from him who should be always ready to die for his country? More than others he suffers by war, and being in continual danger, has more need than others of the help of God. Desiring therefore to essay to revive among us the virtue of the ancients, the which I cannot deem impossible, and in order not to spend my leisure in idleness, I have determined to transcribe all my knowledge of the art of war. I know well that it is somewhat bold to treat of a matter that has never been my business; nevertheless, writers cannot do so much serious mischief by their words as clumsy captains may frequently effect by their deeds." *

The work then begins with an eulogium on Cosimo Rucellai, recently deceased at a very early age, and towards whom Machiavelli shows sincere gratitude and a very warm and deep affection. With a degree of emotion rarely exhibited by him, he says that he cannot mention without tears the name of the deceased, who had all the qualities friends could possibly desire in a good friend, or the country desire in a citizen. "I know "not what thing was so exclusively his own (with-

* *Opere*, vol. iv. p. 187.

"out even excepting his soul) that he would not willingly have bestowed it upon his friends ; I know not any enterprise from which he would have shrunk had it seemed to him to be for the interest of his country." And after this the dialogue begins at once. Fabrizio Colonna, the renowned captain, just returned from the Lombard war, is invited by Cosimo to join the circle in the Oricellarii Gardens, and directly he appears, begins to discourse of military matters. The first of the seven books into which the work is divided, is chiefly devoted to discussion on the kind of men of which an army should be composed. Inflamed by the greatest admiration for the Roman soldiery, Colonna, who is in fact the mouth-piece of Machiavelli and the expounder of his doctrines, remarks that all are now desirous of imitating the ancients in superficial matters, whereas it would be better to try to imitate them in substantial things, namely, in habits of life and soul. We should do as they did, he said, "by honouring and rewarding virtue and having no contempt for poverty ; by esteeming the rules and regulations of military discipline ; by compelling the citizens to love one another, to live without splitting into factions, to have less respect for private than for public interests. . . . The which regulations are not hard to enforce, if duly studied and entered upon in a fitting way, since their truth is so apparent that every ordinary mind can perceive it." * ✓

But the like qualities are never to be found in those who make a trade of war, after the fashion of mercenary

* *Opere*, vol. iv. pp. 196, 197.

troops. These must of necessity be bloodthirsty, rapacious and dishonest, must always desire war or commit deeds of theft and violence for their subsistence in times of peace. "Can you not all remember the extortion, pillage and rapine, perpetrated by the Free Companies without there being any possible remedy? In the days of our forefathers, Francesco Sforza not only deceived the Milanese in whose service he fought, but deprived them of their liberty and made himself lord over them. His father, Attendolo Sforza, compelled the Queen Giovanna, whose pay he took, to throw herself into the arms of the King of Aragon in consequence of his sudden desertion. Braccio di Montone, by means of the same artifices, would have gained possession of the Neapolitan kingdom, but for meeting his death at Aquila. And all this because these men traded in war, and could live by war alone. So long as the Roman Republic preserved its purity, its captains were satisfied with winning victories for their country and then retiring into private life. At the end of the Carthaginian war the times changed; men arose who made fighting their trade, and Rome soon experienced the same dangers into which we have fallen, as in the case of Cæsar and Pompey. For this reason no well-organized State ever permitted its citizens to practise war as a trade. Nor can any existing kingdom be cited as a proof to the contrary, since none observes any good rule. All well-organized States grant their princes absolute power over their armies solely when in camp and during war, since only at such times are sudden decisions imperative, and consequently

the command of one man. In other matters the prince should execute nothing without advice ; and he should be carefully prevented from having about his person in times of peace any of those that always desire war, and neither can nor will subsist without it.* But even leaving well-regulated States out of the question, it cannot be well for living sovereigns to maintain professional soldiers, especially now that the chief strength of armies consists in the infantry. If things be not ordered in such wise that in times of peace soldiers be willing to go home and work at some trade for their bread, it necessarily follows that the State must come to ruin in one way or another. You are forced either to be always at war, or to continue the pay of your soldiery, or to live in danger of their depriving you of your kingdom. Perpetual war is impossible, neither can you keep up a permanent army, so either way you must go to destruction." † In Machiavelli's time the greatest source of danger of this kind lay in the infantry. Men-at-arms were frequently nobles, and therefore, especially in France and Germany, able to live at their own expense. Infantry, on the contrary, was composed of the lower class of townsfolk and peasantry, who unless they returned to peaceable employments depended upon war or permanent pay.

The next point discussed is that of how to make the best choice of men, the *deletto*, as Machiavelli puts it, or as we should now say, the military conscription. And hereupon Colonna, alluding to the treatise of Vegetius, and partly paraphrasing, partly translating it, goes on to

* *Opere*, vol. iv. pp. 202-204.

† *Ibidem*, p. 204.

say : " that it is best to choose natives of temperate climes, since these are men both of courage and prudence, whereas hot climates generate prudent but timid men and cold countries give birth to daring but imprudent men.* But this rule could hold good only for one who should be master of the world and have entire freedom of choice. To form rules available for all, some mode must be found of selecting the best men of every province, and, like the ancients, training them by discipline, which is worth more than nature.†

From Vegetius, too, is borrowed the following description of the physical and moral qualities desired in a soldier : " the eyes quick and lively, the neck sinewy, " the chest broad, the arms muscular, the fingers long, " the stomach small, the hips round, the legs and feet " lean, the which things always give a man strength " and agility, the two things that above all others are " required in a soldier. Great attention must also be paid " to his habits, and to seeing that he hath honesty and " decency, otherwise he is but an instrument of scandal " and an element of corruption ; for let no one believe " that with dishonest habits and an unclean mind

* *Opere*, vol. iv. p. 209. " Omnes nationes quæ vicinæ sunt soli, nimio " calore siccitas, amplius quidem sapere, sed minus habere sanguinis dicunt ; " ac propterea constantiam ac fiduciam cominus non habere pugnandi, quia " metuunt vulnera, qui se exiguum sanguinem habere noverunt. Contra, " septentrionales populi remoti a solis ardoribus, inconsultiores quidem, sed " tamen, largo sanguine redundantes sunt ad bella promptissimi, etc." Flavii Vegetii Renati Comitis, *De re militari libri quinque*. Ex recensione Nicolai Schwebellii-Argentorati, ex typographia Societatis Bipopinæ, 1806. Bk. i. chap. ii. pp. 5, 6.

† *Opere*, vol. iv. pp. 209, 210.

"there can abide any quality in any way worthy of
"praise." *

"You, then," Cosimo Rucellai now objects to Colonna,
"positively wish to re-establish the Florentine militia,
which so many wise men have pronounced to be useless,
and which succeeded so badly upon trial. These wise
men cite the Romans who, although armed in the way
you recommend, nevertheless forfeited their liberty;
they cite the Venetians, who would never sanction this
militia, and the King of France, who disarmed his sub-
jects the better to keep them in subjection. In short,
they condemn the Militia Ordinance rather for its in-
utility than its danger."

To these remarks Fabrizio Colonna replies, that similar
opinions can only be maintained by persons devoid of
accurate knowledge, or genuine experience of military
affairs. "In fact," he says, "it is taught by history

* *Opere*, vol. iv. p. 218. The text of Vegetius runs as follows: "Sit
"ergo adolescens, Martio operi deputandus, vigilantibus oculis, erecta cer-
"vice, lato pectore, humeris muscolosis, valentibus brachiis, digitis longio-
"ribus, ventre modicus, exilior cruribus, suris et pedibus non superflua
"carne distentis, sed nervorum duritia collectis." F. Vegetii, op. cit.,
lib. i. chap. vi. p. 9. Even the words of Machiavelli referring to the
moral qualities of the soldier in the quotation given above, are copied
from the same author. He does not usually quote Vegetius, but in this
passage uses the phrase, "as it is said by those who write on war," nearly
always in reference to Vegetius. And at p. 10 of the Roman treatise we
find these words: "Juventus enim, cui defensio provinciarum, cui bello-
"rum committenda fortuna est, et genere, si copia suppetat, et moribus
"debet excellere. Honestas enim idoneum militem reddit. Verecundia
"dum prohibet fugere, facit esse victorem. Quid enim prodest si exer-
"ceatur ignavus? si pluribus stipendiis mereat in castris? Nunquam exer-
"citus profecit, tempore cuius in probandis tironibus claudicarit electio."
Here we have the same idea and often even the identical words employed
by Machiavelli.

and experience, that all States must be based upon national arms, and that by these only can they be securely defended ; nor is it possible to have national armies excepting by means of the Militia Ordinance. If this did not succeed on its first trial in Florence, we must improve it, not condemn it, and we must also remember that the world has no armies that have been uniformly successful. No wise ruler of States ever doubted but that a country should be defended by its own inhabitants. Had the Venetians comprehended all this they would have established a new empire of the world. In fact, by sea they fought with their own men, and were always victorious ; on land they employed mercenary captains and hireling soldiers ; and they had not a leg left them to stand upon. The Romans, on the other hand, were far wiser, and being at first only practised in fighting on land, when they were opposed at sea by the Carthaginians, speedily trained their people to naval conflicts, and became equally successful. Then as to the example of France, who does not keep her subjects trained to war, and is therefore obliged to have recourse to professional soldiers, there is no man, unless he be blinded by prejudice, who cannot see that this is the true cause of that kingdom's weakness.* "To sum up, Fabrizio Colonna would wish that all able-bodied men, between the ages of seventeen and forty, should be drilled on certain stated days, so as to be always in readiness to defend the country.

From this first book of the *Art of War* it is clearly

* *Opere*, vol. iv. pp. 212-216.

seen, that in the monarchy of Machiavelli, the monarchy approved and recommended by him wherever a republic should be impracticable, the sovereign is surrounded by wise men who assist him with their advice and never allow him absolute rule in times of peace. In war only, the prince must be at the head of his own army and hold absolute command. And whether republic or monarchy, the strength of the State must reside in the armed people that, being trained to discipline, law, and duty, can be trusted to defend the country. Such is the army in which Machiavelli has full confidence, and he desires it to be composed of men who are not merely robust and well-trained soldiers, but above all are virtuous, modest, and disposed to any sacrifice for the public good.* In the *Art of War* he repeatedly insists that virtuous citizens constitute the real strength of armies, and hence the only solid basis of the State. And this implies nothing contradictory to the views expressed in the *Discourses* and in the *Prince*. Even a general should, he thinks, be guided by very different rules of conduct from those imposed in private life. Nevertheless, in public life, citizens, princes, and generals should sacrifice everything to the State, to the welfare of the country; and therein consists the moral value of their actions. Let us take,

* As we have before noted, Machiavelli's political scheme and his military scheme are always fused together into a single complete plan, the second scheme being but the logical sequence of the first. A popular, national army, necessarily implies a preponderance of foot-soldiers. And history teaches that military changes are the result of social and political transformations. *Vide* on this subject: L. Blanch, *Della scienza militare, considerata ne' suoi rapporti colle altre scienze e col sistema sociale. Discorsi nove.* Naples, Porcelli, 1834.

for instance, the honourable soldier who sets forth on a campaign with coolness and resolve, without any personal hatred or rancour. Do we think him less loyal than other men, less generous, less devoted to his duty, because he has to deceive the enemy in order to defeat him, to give rewards to deserters, who are traitors to their country, and to employ spies, who, in their turn fulfil a necessary and hazardous duty?

Hence, according to Machiavelli, we have no right to deny true moral grandeur to the politician who, in obeying the inexorable, natural, and fatal laws of the art of government, obeys them solely for his country's good, and strives for personal wealth and power merely because he is the personification of the State. This sacrifice of personal to public interest is the universal rule of political, as of military conduct. And this rule can only be observed by him who is genuinely good and honest, although he may seem a villain in the eyes of the crowd. Therefore, it is useless to hope that our country can be powerful or our armies strong unless there be real virtue in us.

The second book now proceeds to speak of the method of equipping and training the men. "It was the custom of the Romans to cover the foot-soldier with iron; he carried a shield, a sword, and the short, heavy pike called the *pilum*; the Greeks, on the contrary, and especially the Macedonians, gave him less defensive armour, but a more effective weapon in the spear, called the *sarissa*, of more than fifteen feet in length."*

* *Opere*, vol. iv. ; *Arte della Guerra*, lib. ii. p. 231.

strange that Machiavelli, notwithstanding a thousand proofs to the contrary, should have refused to believe that the Greeks used shields, because he did not understand how they could be necessary to men armed with the *sarissa*.* He gives an admirable definition of the real defects of the Greek phalanx, and of its great inferiority to the Roman legion, but is often very inexact as to details. Not only does he rely upon different authors without distinguishing the periods to which they refer, but when it is necessary to support any one of his theories, always seeks to confirm it by the testimony of the ancients. At this point his object is to prove a resemblance between the weapons of the Greeks and those of the Swiss, the better to point out their defects, and consequently the superiority of his own militia when equipped in the Roman fashion.

"The Swiss," he goes on to say, "have armed their battalions in imitation of the Greek phalanx, concentrating their strength in their pikes, and giving very little armour to the men. And, following their example, foot-soldiers nowadays have an iron breast-piece, a pike over ten feet in length, and a sword that is also very long. Very few wear armour on the back and arms, none on the head, and these few carry a halberd six feet long with a head like an axe. Besides these halberdiers there is a small band armed with firelocks, who do the work of crossbowmen. This method was introduced by the Swiss after they had proved, at the pikes' point, that infantry were capable of vanquishing mounted men, and

* *Opere*, vol. iv. ; *Arte della Guerra*, lib. ii. p. 231.

having thereby risen to very high repute were afterwards imitated by the Germans. But the cavalry once checked and routed, pikes are of no use in the *mêlée*, and the pikemen with their scanty armour are exposed to the blows of the enemy. For this reason the Swiss, though always effective against cavalry, are very weak in resisting infantry that is equipped for fighting at close quarters. The Romans cased their men in armour, and provided them with shields for their defence, and swords for hand-to-hand combat. The Spanish are sufficiently well-armed to be able to overcome the Germans at close quarters ; but they cannot resist the attack of modern cavalry, which is more powerful than the old, both in consequence of its having stouter armour, and also peaked saddles and stirrups such as were unknown in earlier times. When Carmagnola, with six thousand horse and a small body of infantry, had to encounter eighteen thousand Swiss, he was repulsed by the latter's pikes. But being a skilful captain, he made his men-at-arms protected with armour dismount, and in this way defeated the enemy. When the Spanish came to the relief of their Captain Gonsalvo, who was besieged in Barletta, they were met by the French with their men-at-arms and four thousand Germans. The latter, armed with long pikes, quickly broke the ranks of the Spanish infantry, who then, by the aid of small bucklers and their own agility, threw themselves upon their foes so as to have them at sword's length, and made an end of them. The same thing would have occurred at Ravenna, when the Spanish dashed into the midst of the Germans,

and could have destroyed them, but for the charge of the enemy's cavalry, with which they were unable to cope in the same manner. It is therefore necessary to have infantry armed in the Roman fashion, able to resist foot-soldiers like the Spanish, but also fitted to repulse cavalry like the Swiss. And, as with the Romans, this infantry should constitute the main strength of the army, because, although cavalry is useful for clearing the way, laying waste the enemy's country, harassing its troops, keeping it always on the alert, and cutting off its provisions, it is the infantry that decides the fate of pitched battles. Neglect of this consideration has brought about the ruin of Italy in our own day, and we have beheld our country plundered, devastated and overrun by foreigners, solely through the mistake of paying too little attention to foot-soldiers, and turning all our soldiers into horsemen.*

The next subject treated is that of the exercises required for the soldier's training; and on this head Machiavelli contents himself with borrowing from Vegetius, describing and recommending every usage of the Romans,† and winding up by saying that as such exercises were possible among the ancients, "so, too, should they be possible among ourselves, the more especially as we might find examples in many German cities, in which

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. ii. pp. 230-239. The remarks concerning cavalry at p. 239 are among those that, in the opinion of Major Jähns, might well have been written by a modern tactician.

† On comparing Vegetius, lib. i. chap. ix. pp. 12-14, 19, with Machiavelli's *Arte della Guerra*, lib. ii. pp. 243-245, it will be seen that the latter imitates and often simply translates the former writer.

these customs are preserved, and where every inhabitant makes his choice of arms, is inscribed accordingly and sent to drill on his leisure days. But it is not enough to exercise and train every soldier separately ; they must be also exercised and disciplined in masses. Every army should therefore have, as it were, a principal branch, in which to collect and train its men in concert. The Romans had their legion, the Greeks their phalanx, while the Swiss have their battalions, and we ought to follow their example." * Thus, for the reasons given by him, Machiavelli equips his battalion partly in Grecian, partly in Roman fashion, and composes it of six thousand men, divided into ten companies, just as the Roman legion, composed, he tells us, of from five to six thousand men, was divided into ten cohorts.† Every company consists of 450 infantry, of whom 400 are heavily armed, or else of 100 equipped with pikes, and 300 with sword and shield. The remaining fifty men, answering to the *velites*, are lightly armed with firelocks, crossbows, or similar weapons. The pikemen compose the five foremost ranks, twenty in each ; the bearers of swords and shields the other fifteen. But, in order that the battalion may be protected on all sides from the enemy's horse, it is strengthened by 1500 extra foot soldiers, of whom 1000 are armed with pikes, and disposed on the flanks of the battalion, and 500 *velites* who, together with the others, form the wings. Once or twice yearly the whole

* *Arte della Guerra*, p. 246.

† Machiavelli here alludes to the legion described by Vegetius (lib. ii. chap. vi.), not to that of Servius Tullius, which was of three thousand foot, was easier to handle and better disciplined.

battalion must be called under arms, and manœuvred as in time of war. To have a courageous army it is less necessary for it to consist of brave men than for it to be well disciplined, since if, for instance, I am among the foremost combatants, and know upon whom I have to fall back in case of repulse, and who will take my place afterwards, I shall always fight with courage, knowing that succour is at hand." * Just as in the *Discourses* Machiavelli attributes extraordinary efficacy to good political codes, crediting them with an inherent power to bestow liberty and generate virtue, so in the *Art of War* he attributes an extraordinary efficacy to good military discipline, and believes it all-sufficient both to create soldiers and to endow them with courage.

He now proceeds to marshal his company, prescribing the various forms it may take, the various manœuvres it must execute, and describing all its evolutions with considerable minuteness. "More than all else, is it necessary to have soldiers who will quickly conform to discipline; and it is necessary to keep them together in these companies, to drill them in their ranks, and make them step quickly, or forwards or backwards, or go over difficult ground without breaking line; for men who can do this well are practised soldiers, and even although they may never have set eyes on the enemy, may be said to be veteran soldiers. . . . This is as concerns getting them together when they are in small file, and on the march. But if after being drawn up in mass, their ranks should be broken by some accident,

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. ii. pp. 250, 251.

"whether from the nature of the ground or by attack of the enemy, then it is a most important and difficult task to make them recover themselves quickly, and a matter demanding great practice and experience, even as it was much studied by the ancients." *

Machiavelli had great reason to insist so strongly upon this point. Armies were then ordered in such fashion, that if, during battle, the enemy succeeded in attacking them on the flank, all was lost, on account of the great difficulty of changing front. Thus, when the foremost ranks had to fall back, there was general confusion, and nothing more could be done.† By continually urging the necessity of making the army easy to handle and capable of instantaneous change of front, on every fresh emergency or peril, the author of the *Art of War* proved that he knew the best mode of improving the tactics of his time.

On careful examination of Machiavelli's system of forming his battalion, he will be found to contradict himself upon one point. He places his sole reliance on the infantry and wishes it to be equipped in the Roman fashion, so as to be very easily handled, and readier for attack than defence, and he never seems to wish to give much importance to the cavalry. Yet, not only does he burden his militia bands with armour, but hedges them in with pikemen on every side, for their better defence against those cavalry charges that cause him such con-

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. ii. p. 257.

† All historians of the art of war agree upon this point, and Louis Napoleon Bonaparte makes the same remark in his work: "*Du présent, du passé et de l'avenir de l'artillerie*, vol. i. p. 83.

tinual anxiety. He even reproaches the Spanish infantry for their negligence on that score, since they were often thrown into disorder by cavalry attacks, although able to recover themselves at close quarters. And this occurred because, although he could clearly discern what would be the future of infantry, he could not in practice altogether refuse to recognize the great importance that the cavalry still continued to have in the wars of the period, and therefore often felt obliged to recur to the question of the best means of opposing the onslaught of men-at-arms.* The same idea also prevailed in the formation of the Swiss battalions that Machiavelli so heartily admired, and he urged it all the more strongly because of the slight value attributed by him to firearms. But leaving aside this theoretical contradiction, it is certain that the battalion of Machiavelli is a positive improvement on that of the Swiss, on account of its greater flexibility, ease of movement and adaptability.† So good was it, in fact, that but for the progress of firearms, the logical and

* "Machiavelli nimmt also die Legionartaktik der Römer zum Vorbilde. "Aber trotzdem bleibt auch seine Schlachtordnung mehr auf die Defensive "als auf den Angriff eingerichtet; denn selbst dieser grosse Geist vermag "sich nicht ganz frei zu machen von dem Banne der mittelalterlichen "Tradition, welche dem Fussvolke unbedingt die inferiore Stellung gegen "über der Reiterei zuwies. Er vermag das römische Vorbild nicht zu "erreichen." Jähns, *Machiavelli als militärischer Techniker*, p. 554. Major Chiala frequently notices the same contradiction.

† "Let us compare," says Major Chiala, "the formation proposed by "Machiavelli with that adopted by the Swiss, and we can easily see that "for lightness and divisableness (*frazionabilità*) the former immensely "surpasses the latter. The Swiss method of formation must have been very "primitive, although it was the approved method of the period, that of "moving in great squares of about 10,000 men each! How much lighter, "handier and more divisible is the formation recommended by Machiavelli!"

natural development of the art of war would have inevitably led it into the road indicated by him, and to the adoption of his proposed reforms which are consequently of very considerable value.* The perfecting of muskets and guns afterwards led to the disuse of compact battalions, and showed the need of facing the enemy with thinner and more extended ranks. This, however, was only effected at a much later period.

At this point the speakers moot a question similar to that already started by Machiavelli in the *Discourses*. He had inquired : how it was that the ancients possessed greater political liberty and virtue than the moderns ? And the reply had been : because they had republican institutions, and because Pagan creeds encouraged force, patriotism and even ferocity, whereas Christianity thinks rather of Heaven than of earth, and accords to meekness a higher place than to force. Only among the Swiss and the Germans are any instances of ancient virtue still to be found. And in the *Art of War* Cosimo Rucellai asks in the same way : how it is that whereas Europe had so many great captains in old times, and Asia and Africa so few, there should be so few anywhere at the present day ? "The ancients," replies Fabrizio Colonna, "had in Europe many kingdoms or republics which, in making war

* "We may say that but for the intervention of the new element of fire-arms, the art of war would have developed in the direction of the model proposed by Machiavelli. It is certain that from the Swiss phalanx we should gradually have come to configurations of a lighter, more elastic, better articulated kind ; in short, to formations approaching nearer and nearer to the type of the legion, the exact *quid simile* of that proposed by Machiavelli." *Remarks*, by Major Chiala.

upon one another, cultivated military virtues ; the nations of the East, on the contrary, had only one or two great empires. Africa was in a more fortunate condition in this respect, on account of the Carthaginian Republic. A greater number of excellent men are generated in republics than in monarchies, since in the former, virtue is generally held in honour, whereas in monarchies it is feared ; whence it comes that virtuous men flourish in the one, while they are extinguished in the other.* And when the Roman empire having waxed mighty in Europe and become master of the world, enemies were no longer dreaded, then military virtue disappeared from the same causes that had destroyed it among the nations of the East. It is true that the barbarians again divided the empire ; but a virtue that has once disappeared is not easily revived. Besides which, the Christian religion does not prescribe the same duty of resistance imposed by the ancient creeds, and therefore beneath its sway affairs are not carried on with the old ferocity.† There are now great kingdoms that have no fear of their neighbours, and small cities that depend upon potentates for their defence ; and thus there is less occasion for the conflicts that serve to promote military virtue. Behold Germany, where, because there are many principalities and republics, there is much military virtue, and you will perceive that whatever good there may be in the present military scheme, is derived from the example of those nations, who, being jealously attached to their govern-

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. ii. p. 271.

† *Ibidem*, p. 273.

ments, and fearing slavery as it is not feared elsewhere, all preserve their independence and honour." *

At the close of the second book, Cosimo reminds Fabrizio that he has not yet touched on the question of cavalry. And the latter replies that he has not mentioned it, because it is of slighter importance than infantry, and is also in a far better condition. "If not "stronger than that of the ancients it is certainly as "strong." Therefore he would make little or no alteration in it. He would introduce a few matchlock-men among the light horse, but rather to scare the country-folk than to produce any real effect. He would like every battalion to include 150 men-at-arms and 150 light horse; he would like to see a great diminution in Italy of the excessive number of horses and waggons employed in transporting the arms and baggage of the cavalry. But he has no other suggestion to add. The studies and principal experience of Machiavelli, and consequently the proposals he wished to make, were chiefly directed to the infantry.

In the third book the army is arrayed in order of battle, to meet the enemy in the field. The greatest blunder that can be perpetrated, according to Machiavelli, is that of presenting a single front to the enemy, as was the practice in his time, a single line of battle, that compelled the entire army to risk everything at the same moment. And this came about because of their incapacity to imitate the Romans, who divided their legion into the *Acies*, or vanguard, *Principes*, or centre

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. ii. p. 274.

and *Triarii*, or rearguard. The first stood of course to the front, and in serried ranks ; the centre were formed in looser ranks, so as to be able to include the first, should these suffer repulse ; the ranks of the rearguard were still thinner, so as to leave space to receive both *Acies* and *Principes*. The Greeks, being armed with long spears, did not re-order themselves in this way ; but instead, every fallen soldier was replaced by the one behind him, and thus all the ranks were close excepting the hindermost, which was gradually thinned. The Romans also began by following this plan, but then it ceased to please them and they divided their legions into cohorts and *manipuli*, deeming that the body with most life was that containing most souls and composed of the greatest number of parts, each of which could exist by itself." * The Swiss, he goes on to say, form their great battalions on the plan of the Greek phalanx, and divide their army into three battalions placed in the following order : the second to the right and in the rear of the first, the third still further in the rear to the left. The first, when retreating cannot fall back among the second and third ; but these advance instead to reinforce it when

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. iii. p. 280. There is some confusion and inaccuracy here. The author does not discriminate between the legion as it was formed in the times of Servius Tullus, and what it afterwards became when divided into cohorts. The former, divided into *manipuli*, was composed of 3000 foot soldiers, that is of 1200 *Acies*, 1200 *Principes* and 600 *Triarii*. It is not true that the *Principes* were fewer in number. It is true, however, that they were disposed so as to be able to open their ranks to the *Acies*, in case of these being obliged to fall back, and that both bodies could fall back among the *Triarii*, who were fewer in number and arranged in far looser ranks. Machiavelli seems to refer sometimes to this legion, sometimes to that described by Vegetius.

necessary. And therefore, just as the compactness of the phalanx had to give way to the mobility and flexibility of the Roman legion, so the unwieldy Swiss battalions must give way to our militia bands, that can turn about and fight in all directions, can thrice form a new front when obliged to fall back, can assume any shape, can receive cavalry charges with the pike, and repulse infantry with the sword.*

Machiavelli composes his regular army of four battalions, each divided into ten companies, like the ten cohorts of the legion described by Vegetius. The total force would amount to 24,000 foot and 1200 horse, but to simplify matters he only takes two battalions into consideration: that is, 12,000 foot and 600 horse, since the same remarks would hold good for double that number of men. He therefore places ten companies in the front, six immediately behind, and four to the rear, so that the foremost rank may fall back into the second and both into the third. Each battalion has its pikemen in the front ranks and its shield-bearers in the others. On either flank of the army are planted the bands called pikemen extraordinary, in order to withstand the enemy's cavalry on all sides. Machiavelli stations his cavalry in the wings, the artillery to the front. During the *mêlée*, these companies re-form in that which he calls the Roman order: that is, the front ranks fall back into the second,

* Here, too, he continually copies from Vegetius. The *Arte della Guerra* may be verified, by comparing pages 278, 279, 281, 282 and 283 with Vegetius, *De re militari*, above-mentioned edition, pages 21, 22, 31, 33, 35, 87, 88, 89.



and both into the third. In each, however, the men follow the method that he has said to be peculiar to the Greek phalanx, the hinder man advancing to take the place of the fallen comrade in front.

The opposing armies are now supposed to be face to face, and Fabrizio Colonna explains the movements of that under his own command. The guns are discharged without much effect save the production of smoke. Soon after the *milites* (swordsmen) and the light horse advance, scatter in skirmishing order and charge the enemy, whose batteries have already opened fire, although their projectiles pass over the heads of Fabrizio's infantry. The pikes vigorously repulse the attack; but when hand to hand fighting begins, they can do nothing and therefore fall back to make room for the infantry armed with swords and shields, who then rout the enemy.

After Fabrizio Colonna's description of this battle, which is given with much fervour and minuteness, Luigi Alamanni inquires: "Why have you allowed your batteries to be silent after a single volley? why have you planted those of the enemy in such fashion that their shots pass over the heads of your men? I have always heard the weapons and battle order of the ancients spoken of with contempt, for it was said that they would now be powerless against artillery which can tear through the ranks and penetrate breast-plates." "It is," replies Fabrizio, "because I allowed only one discharge, and was even doubtful as to allowing that, since it is more important for me to avoid receiving injury from the guns of the enemy than to inflict injury

upon him with mine.* Hence it is necessary to march rapidly on his batteries and in loose ranks, so that he may have no time to fire, or that in any case his missiles may only strike scattered men. And as I have said, I hesitated whether to fire a single discharge, because I know that the smoke of the guns screens the enemy from your view. And I have supposed his balls to pass over the heads of my men because that in fact is what nearly always occurs. For truly cannon are so difficult of management, that if you aim ever so little too high their balls pass over the enemy's head, and if you lower them in the least they fire into the ground. And they are altogether useless in a general engagement.

"I am well aware that many hold the ancient order of battle to be quite ineffectual against artillery, just as though any new order of battle had been discovered that could stand fire with success. If you are acquainted with any such order, I should be glad to learn it, for up to this moment I have never seen one, nor can believe that any be possible. I should wish you to inform me why the foot-soldiers of the present day still wear iron breast-plates and corselets, and why mounted troops are always cased in armour? The Swiss, like the ancients, formed in close battalions of six to eight thousand men, and all have followed their example. There is nothing so dangerous as to face artillery in close order, yet that is the prevailing practice of our time. And if it affords no protection against artillery—against which, indeed, there can be no real defence—it is always effectual against

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. iii. p. 294.

infantry, cavalry, pikes, swords, cross-bows, etc. Besides, if it is still possible to sit down before a city, and within range of batteries that may damage you, without being damaged in return, so is it still easier to encamp in the open field, without losing heart and without presuming the possibility of ever forsaking the old methods. This army of ours, therefore, will always have an advantage over others of modern times, since being better disciplined and better armed it can check the enemy at the first shock and rout him at close quarters ; can renew the attack thrice without being thrown into disorder ; can easily change front and fight on all sides." *

In the fourth and fifth books the handling of the whole army is discussed, and always in conformity with Roman examples. For on this head, never having witnessed any great war, nor the manœuvres of large forces, Machiavelli had little that was new to suggest from his own experience. The aim he keeps most constantly in view, is that of enabling his army to execute the most complicated manœuvres with great rapidity, even when in presence of the enemy. For this reason, he always objects to a very extended front, considering it to be a source of the utmost danger.† His prejudice against firearms did not allow him to foresee that they would lead to the necessity of ever wider and shallower lines.

When the army is ill-provided with cavalry Machiavelli advises that it should be posted among trees and vineyards if possible, as were the Spaniards at the battle of Cerignola. He counsels the employment of the

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. iii. pp. 293-301.

† *Ibidem*, lib. iv. p. 314.

strongest portion of his own army against the weakest part of the opposing force, the better, while falling back on one side, to outflank it on the other.* And this was a manœuvre always practised by great captains. Some of his other observations seem suggested rather by plain common sense than by the art of war, although, even as regards the latter, the natural talent of a commander and his knowledge of mankind have always been and will ever be of higher importance than mere technical skill. Machiavelli recommends secrecy in all military enterprises, study of and familiarity with the theatre of war, and says that above all it is highly expedient to place the soldier in the alternative of only being able to find safety in victory. "There may be many motives to urge you on, but strongest of all is that which compels you to conquer or to die."† The examples adduced in these two books are generally drawn from ancient history.

And so too in the sixth book, when treating of the method of quartering troops, Machiavelli tries to remain faithful to the Romans, although compelled more than once to abandon their teachings on account of the changed condition of the times. Colonna begins by acknowledging that it might perhaps be better "first to encamp the army, then to march it, and lastly to take it into action." But wishing to show how, while on the march, it was possible to suddenly change from marching order to order of battle, he was induced to begin by drawing it up in fighting array as soon

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. iv. p. 316. † *Ibidem*, p. 332.



The "Art of War."

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as he possibly could.* Accordingly he now treats the question of encampments without adding anything new that is worthy of special mention. Here he makes arrangements, no longer for two only, but for four battalions, that is for his entire regular army of 24,000 foot and about 2000 horse. As the Roman armies consisted of 24,000 foot, and even in extraordinary cases, according to him, seldom exceeded 50,000, and with that number succeeded in vanquishing 200,000 Gauls, so, too, the moderns should follow their example."† "It is true that the nations of the East and the West were accustomed to make war with armed multitudes; but the latter depended entirely on their inborn, savage ferocity, the former on the great and general reverence felt for their rulers, and the passive obedience yielded unto them. For the southern populations of Italy and Greece, who were wanting both in native hardihood and passive obedience, it was necessary to recur to discipline, by which the well-organized few were enabled to overcome the fury and obduracy of the many. The ancients succeeded in everything better than ourselves, and especially in warfare; and whoever would imitate them must not collect armies that are too numerous, for then discipline is disordered and confusion engendered.‡ And towards the firm maintenance of this discipline, Machiavelli suggests that the right of punishment, and to some extent the judicial function, should be vested

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. vi. p. 360.

† *Ibidem*, lib. vi. p. 380; Vegetius, bk. ii. ch. iv.

‡ *Arte della Guerra*, lib. vi. p. 380.

in a popular tribunal, after the Roman fashion, and according to the practice of the Swiss, among whom offenders against discipline were put to death by their own comrades. "And this," he says, "is a well-conceived idea, for the criminal will find no defenders among those who have punished him."* We find certain counsels or suggestions in this book serving to emphasize the great difference of the morality of those times, whether in war or in peace, from that of our own day. Machiavelli, for instance, tells us that some troops abandoned their camp and all its stores to the enemy, in order to take him by surprise when gorged with food and wine, and adds, without comment, that sometimes they ensured success by first mixing poison in the wine.†

A more valuable portion of the *Art of War* is that comprised in the seventh and last book, in which the author preludes his final pages by the exposition of some very remarkable theories of fortification. Civil and military engineers, both in Italy and other countries, had long directed their attention to the study of works of defence. But the employment of artillery led to the radical transformation of these also. The lofty old walls were easily demolished by cannon, and the loftier towers no longer served to damage the enemy, since it was impossible to carry guns up to their roofs; and stones and other missiles that could be hurled from them were powerless against an enemy able to remain at some distance. Therefore less elevated and more massive constructions were required, upon which it should be

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. vi. p. 376.

† *Ibidem*, p. 380.

possible to plant heavy pieces of cannon. Machiavelli had had some experience of all this, both in the camp, before Pisa, and while preparing for the defence of Florence and Prato against the Spanish in 1512. And at a later period he was again obliged to study the question with the celebrated Pietro Navarro, in planning the defence of his native city against the hosts of Charles V.

There is certainly no lack of value and originality in the ideas upon this subject set down in the *Arte della Guerra*,* although they occasionally seem to refer to a state of things anterior to the development to which the science of fortification had at that time attained. Machiavelli still wished all walls to be too high to be scaled.† For once, however, he here admits the value of artillery, of which he says, "so great is the fury, that a single wall can in no way withstand it."‡ And more than that, he not only recognized what was the fundamental problem of that period, but even suggested a solution of his own. "If the walls are too high," he observes, "it is impossible to plant heavy artillery upon them, and no resistance can be made to that of the enemy, which will easily open a breach; if they are too low they are easily scaled." It had long

* "Kühn und scharfsinnig sind seine fortificatorischen Ideen." This is the verdict of Major Jähns in his before quoted essay in the "*Grenzboten*," p. 556.

† "D'après Machiavelli qui dans son *Art de la Guerre* nous a donné des "renseignements applicables à une époque un peu antérieure à celle où il "écrit, le mur doit être aussi haut que possible, etc." Louis Napoléon Bonaparte, *Du présent, du passé et de l'avenir de l'artillerie*, vol. ii. p. 106.

‡ *Arte della Guerra*, lib. vii. p. 398.

been sought to remedy this danger by the *rempart* of the French. The wall, still very high, was packed with earth on the inner side, and was thus thickened and fortified against the enemy's fire. But this system had one serious defect, already noted by others, and which had come under Machiavelli's personal observation at Pisa. On the opening of a breach in a wall of this sort, the broken fragments always fell in the direction whence the shots came, followed by a shower of earth from the rampart. By this means the outer moat was choked up, and it was easy for the enemy to storm the breach.

Accordingly, Machiavelli proposed a new system, which he had twice seen tried on a very small scale at Pisa in 1500 and 1505.* On these occasions the Florentines had to retreat after making a wide breach in the city wall, because the Pisans had dug a trench behind the wall, and raised an earthwork beyond. The same experiment had been tried on a larger scale, and with still greater success, at Padua in the year 1509, when the whole defence of the city had been conducted on the new principle, and compelled Maximilian's very powerful army to beat an ignominious retreat. Machiavelli, as it is well known, was intimately acquainted with every detail of the Pisan war, and as he was at Mantua and Verona in the course of 1509, he had opportunities for accurate information concerning the celebrated defence of Padua. For this made great sensation at the time : † Guicciardini has left us a most minute account of it, and

* Nardi, *Storia di Firenze*, vol. i. pp. 225, 362.

† *Storia d'Italia*, bk. viii. chap. iv.

from certain letters written to Machiavelli, it is plain that he sought information about it at the time of its occurrence.*

The system suggested by him was this. Walls must be bastioned (*ritorte*) and have many angles, so that the attacking force may be within range from various directions. He also proposed two lines of circumvallation with a wide trench between them. The outer wall was to be at least six feet thick, surmounted by towers at intervals of four hundred feet, and built as high as possible to prevent the enemy from scaling it. Instead of having a trench outside, it was to have one within, and this was to be sixty feet wide and twelve deep, with casemates at the bottom four hundred feet apart. The earth excavated in making the trench was to be thrown up on the side towards the city to serve for the inner walls or earthworks, which were to be sufficiently high to mask the men, and sufficiently solid to bear the heavy artillery that was to respond to the enemy's fire. In this way, he said, should a breach be made in the outer wall, it will happen, as at Pisa, that the masonry, by falling on the side on which it is struck, instead of filling up the ditch behind, will form a rampart increasing its depth, and the enemy will have to face, first this new rampart, then the trench, and after that the second wall defended by the heaviest guns.†

Machiavelli does not approve of outer forts or other detached works at a distance from the walls, because

* *Vide* document vi. in Appendix (II.) of Italian edition.

† *Arte della Guerra*, bk. vii. pp. 394, 395.

directly these are captured the fortress also must fall. Accordingly, the ground should be cleared and levelled for the space of a mile from the walls.* And in the opinion of modern writers this idea also was new and original at that day. It seems that in Germany something on the plan of Machiavelli's proposed system was suggested by the great intellect of Albert Dürer, who may also have derived the idea from the attack and defence of Padua. At any rate, it is certain that the ideas scientifically expounded in the *Art of War* afford additional proof of Machiavelli's marvellous acumen and admirably practical mind.

But so rapid were the changes then introduced by artillery in every system of fortification, that there was no time for the trial of these intermediate schemes, however ingenious they might be, and however successful they may have proved on first experiment.†

This would be the place to quote a series of observa-

* *Arte della Guerra*, bk. vii. p. 401.

† This is the judgment pronounced by Major Jähns at the close of his previously quoted essay:

“Machiavelli's Vorschläge ähneln in mancher Beziehung denjenigen, welche Dürer zur Verstärkung vorhandener alter Stadtbefestigungen macht; wahrscheinlich hatten beide ihr Vorbild in Padua, dessen vergebliche Belagerung im Jahre 1509 durch Kaiser Maximilian so grosses Aufsehen gemacht hatte; denn diese Stadt war in einer Weise remparirt, welche der von Machiavelli empfohlenen sehr nahe kommt. Wie ein-sichtig und klardenkend übrigens Machiavelli in Dingen der Befestigungskunst war, lehrt sein Protokoll über die Besichtigung der Fortificationen von Florenz durch Navarro, und sein Schreiben an Guicciardini über denselben Gegenstand (1526). Merkwürdig erscheint es, dass er bereits mit Entschiedenheit, die Forderung eines Rayongesetzes ausspricht und zwar eines viel strengern als es irgend eine neuere Verordnung gethan hat. —Bis zu einer Meile Entfernung von der Festung darf weder Mauerwerk aufgeführt, noch auch das Feld bestellt werden.”

tions made by Machiavelli on improvements in the construction of loopholes and portcullises, of wheels and trucks for the transport of artillery, of draw-bridges, etc. And by these it would be seen that he never allowed any opportunity of observation to escape him, noted all that he saw, and that his remarks were always ingenious and acute and never wanting in practical merit. But we prefer to hasten to the conclusion of the work, which Machiavelli prefaces by a few military maxims or aphorisms of the following kind: "He who starts in disorderly pursuit of the beaten enemy must wish to change from victor to loser. Alter your plan, when you perceive that it has been foreseen by the enemy. Sudden accidents are hard to remedy, but anticipated ones are easy of cure. Men, iron, money and bread are the sinews of war; but the first two are the most necessary of all, for men and iron can gain both money and bread; but bread and money cannot serve to obtain men and iron."*

And now Colonna hastens to make an end, saying that although he might have explained many other matters relating to ancient warfare, his sole object was to speak of what was requisite for the good organization of modern armies. He has said nothing of the naval service, because he knows nothing of it.† If you wish to learn what are the qualities required in a good captain, I can be very brief, since it only behoves me to tell you that he must know all the things described above; but that these will not suffice him unless his own wits help him

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. vii. pp. 413, 414.

† *Ibidem*, p. 415.

to fresh discoveries, for no one has ever risen to greatness in his profession without invention, and this gift is above all indispensable in war.* As I have shown you, there would be no difficulty in reorganizing the militia on the ancient plan; but in order to do so, you would need to be a prince powerful enough to get together fifteen or twenty thousand youths for the purpose of making them good soldiers. And no greater glory could be imagined; since if it be praiseworthy to win a battle with a good army, still more admirable is it to have created a victorious army. Pelopidas, Epaminondas, Philip of Macedon the sire of Alexander, and Cyrus, king of the Persians, were of this number. They won success by their sagacity, and by having had subjects adapted to their purpose; but no one of them, however excellent, could have accomplished any praiseworthy undertaking in a land like Italy, that is full of corrupt men unused to any honourable obedience. Here it is not enough to be able to command an army; it is requisite first to know how, and to have the power to form one, and therefore it is necessary to begin by being prince of an extensive State. I could not be a leader of this kind since I have always commanded foreign armies, mercenary adventurers, men bound to others and not to me. And I leave you to judge whether it be possible to introduce any useful reform among soldiers of their stamp! How could I force them to carry more weapons than usual, or to submit to longer hours of drill? When could they be forced to abstain from the deeds of lust and insolence

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. vii. p. 416.

and cruelty daily committed by them? When could they be made so obedient to discipline, that an apple-tree laden with fruit might stand untouched in the midst of their encampment, as we read was frequently the case among the ancients? What promises can I hold out to them, when, at the end of the war, they have nothing more to do with me?

"How can I teach shame to men born and reared in "shamelessness? In the name of what God and "of what saints can I make them swear faith? In the "name of those they worship, or of those they blaspheme? Of the Gods they may worship, I know "nothing; but I well know that they blaspheme against "all. How can those who take God's name in vain "feel reverence for men? Into what good shape then "would it be possible to mould such material?" *

"The Swiss and Spanish, although far from perfect, are much better than Italians, who from lack of good discipline are the disgrace of the world. Not that the people are to blame, but rather their princes, who have reaped their punishment by losing their States with ignominy and without giving any proof of virtue. And the excessive badness of all existing methods of training is clearly shown by the fact that after the numerous wars that have occurred in Italy, from the descent of Charles VIII. to the present day, our armies, instead of improving by practice in warfare, have grown continually worse. Nor is there any other remedy than the one which I have indicated, that, namely, of finding a prince

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. vii. pp. 418, 419.

with the ability and power to form an army of rough men, as yet unspoiled by the present bad methods of training. It is easier to mould rough and uncultured minds into a fresh shape than corrupt minds, just as a good sculptor can carve a better statue from a block of unhewn marble than from one badly cut into shape."

"Our Italian princes, before experiencing the shocks of foreign wars, were accustomed to believe that it was sufficient for a prince to be able to devise a sharp answer in his writing office, to pen a fine epistle, show wit and readiness in his words and sayings, be able to lay schemes, deck himself with gold and gems, sleep and eat with greater luxury than other men, surround himself with many sensual delights, rule his subjects with avarice and haughtiness, become rotten with sloth, confer military promotion as a favour; . . . nor did the poor wretches foresee that they were thus preparing themselves to fall a prey to the first enemy that should assail them. Hence, in the year fourteen hundred and ninety-four, came terrible alarms, sudden flights and miraculous defeats, and thus three of the most powerful States of Italy have been repeatedly pillaged and laid waste."

"And still worse is it that the surviving princes persist in the same error and in the same disorder; nor do they reflect how those who wished to preserve their States in the olden times, held the first rank among combatants, and when fortune went against them, preferred to lose their life together with their State, so that they either lived or died with honour. And although certain of

them might be charged with exceeding ambition or ferocity, they could not be accused of supineness nor of any slothful habit fitted to render men enervated and impotent. And had our princes ever read and believed these things, it would have been impossible for them not to have altered their way of life, and thus changed the fortunes of their States.

"But since you have complained of your Militia Ordinance, I will tell you, that if you have truly trained it in the way described by me above, and that nevertheless it has failed to succeed, then, indeed, you have a right to complain: but that if you have not trained and disciplined it as I have directed, then it might move complaint against you, for having created an abortion instead of a perfect shape. So the Venetians and the Duke of Ferrara began in the right way and then ceased to continue in it, wherefore they were to blame and not their men." "And I declare to you that whichever of the "princes now holding States in Italy shall enter first "upon this road, he will be first to become lord of this "country; and it will be with his State as it was with "the kingdom of Macedon, the which, coming under the "sway of Philip who had been taught how to train armies "by Epaminondas the Theban, rose to such power by "means of this discipline and training, that in a few "years Philip was master of the whole of the other "Grecian lands that were given up to idleness and play "acting, and left his son a foundation enabling him to "make himself lord of the world. He then, who, being "a prince, should yet despise these ideas, despises his

"kingdom ; if a citizen, his city. And I am ill-content
 "with nature, for either she should have withheld from
 "me knowledge of these things, or should have given
 "me power to execute them. Nor, being aged, can I
 "longer hope for any opportunity of executing them,
 "and therefore I have been liberal with you, who, being
 "young and gifted, may be able, if my words have found
 "favour with you, to forward or suggest them at the
 "fitting moment in aid of your princes. And I would
 "wish you to feel neither dismay nor distrust, for this
 "land seems born to give new life to dead things, as has
 "been seen in poetry and painting and sculpture. But
 "as regards myself, being already advanced in years, I
 "certainly feel no hope. Yet truly, had fortune in past
 "times granted me a State large enough for a similar
 "enterprise, I believe that I could have speedily shown
 "the world the great value of ancient military methods ;
 "and doubtless I should either have gloriously aggran-
 "dized my State or lost it without dishonour."*

Here, then, we behold upon the stage the kingly deliverer, who is to save the country by force of arms, after the likeness of Philip of Macedon. And this is the connecting link between the *Art of War* and the *Prince* :—The first Italian who will follow my councils, shall, to his immortal honour, succeed in the magnanimous enterprise of freeing his country.—This, Machiavelli had said to Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici ; this, he had repeated to his friends in the Oricellarii Gardens, and written in his *Discourse on the reforming of Florence*, to Cardinal

* *Arte della Guerra*, lib. vii. pp. 419-423.

de' Medici and Leo X.; this he again repeats in the *Art of War*. And if in this last work his idea shines forth more clearly than elsewhere, and his admiration for virtue appears more explicit, his patriotism purer and more ardent, this solely results from the subject that he had to treat. But if he spoke with so much clearness now that he was at last in contact with the Medici, and for the first time in his life had certain hopes of their favour, surely no one need believe that he would have sought to express different ideas, or seen reason to disguise his patriotism, when writing the *Discourses* and the *Prince* during the lifetime of Giuliano and Lorenzo, of whom the former at least was undoubtedly of a gentler mind than either Cardinal or Pope.

CHAPTER VIII.

Machiavelli is commissioned to write his *Histories*—Soderini tries to dissuade him from accepting—His journey to Carpi and correspondence with Guicciardini—Pope Adrian VI.—New proposals of reform in Florence—Plot against the Medici, and condemnation of the conspirators.

WHILE many men, including Cardinal de' Medici himself, were reading and pondering the *Art of War*, the *Life of Castruccio Castracani* had already, as we have seen, passed through the hands of all the friends of the Oricellarii Gardens, and already been a subject of dispute among them. All, however, agreed in considering it a positive proof of Machiavelli's singular aptitude for the historic style, and accordingly encouraged him to again try his skill in that way. Many of these friends were persons of influence in Florence at that time, and their verdict obtained some useful results for him. In fact, in the November of 1520 he was commissioned by the directors of the Studio to write a history of Florence. Cardinal de' Medici, as provisional Archbishop of Florence, was also head of the Studio, and conferred Academic degrees, in virtue of a bull of Leo X. (31st January, 1515), that confirmed the privileges already

The Commission for a History of Florence. 145

granted by the Emperor, Charles IV.* Therefore it must have been chiefly owing to the Cardinal that this commission was given to Machiavelli, who, indeed, when the former became Pope Clement VII., dedicated the *Histories* to him, and at a later period received a subsidy from him for their continuation. The negotiations were conducted by Francesco del Nero, administrator of the Studio, who was related to Machiavelli. The latter drew up his own stipulations, namely, that for a number of years and in consideration of a salary of which the amount is not stated, he was to employ himself upon the history of Florence, "from whatever period he "might think fit to select, and either in the Latin or the "Tuscan tongue, according to his taste."† The directors came to their decision on the 8th November, 1520, engaging Machiavelli (*conducendolo*) for two years, one certain, the other at their pleasure, with a yearly salary of one hundred florins, and the obligation of being at

* Prezziner, *Storia del Pubblico Studio*, etc., vol. i. pp. 201, 202, document xii.

† These stipulations are in a letter of Machiavelli's to Del Nero, that is in the Florence Archives, and was first published by Professor Corazzini in his *Miscellanea di cose inedite e rare* (Florence, 1853), p. 114. It was afterwards given in complete form in the *Opere* of Machiavelli (Florence, Usigli, 1857, at p. 1198), and has been recently republished in the *Vita di N. Machiavelli* of Signor Amico. We reproduce it here :

"Spectabilis vir,

"Let this be the substance of the agreement. Let the agreement be "made for so many years, with a salary to be paid yearly, etc., binding "and obliging the recipient to write the annals or history of the things "done by the State and city of Florence, from whatever period he shall "think fittest, and in either the Latin or Tuscan tongue, as may seem most "convenient to him."

NICOLAUS MACHIAVELLI.

Honorando cognato, Francisco del Nero.

their orders, in case they should demand other work of him.*

* The decision of the directors was published in the *Opere* (P.M.), p. lxxxix. We give it below, adding the memoranda of the first instalments paid to Machiavelli, and which are also recorded in the *Libro degli stipendiati per lo Studio, dal 1514 al 1521*, preserved in the Florence Archives.

"Die viij. mensis novembrio M.D.XX. Conduxerunt Niccholaum de Machiavellis civem florentinum ad serviendum dicto eorum officio, et inter alia ad componendum annalia et cronacas florent. Et alia faciendum, que et prout dictis dominis officialibus fuerit expediens pro tempore et termino duorum annorum initiatorum die prima presentis mensis novembris, uno scilicet firmo, altero verum ad beneplacitum dictorum domini norum officialium cum salario quolibet anno florenorum centum, ad rationem librorum quatuor pro quolibet floreno solvendorum de quatuor mensibus in quatuor menses cum taxis obligationibus et aliis consuetis" (sheet 104).

* * * * *

"Die xij. junii M.D.XXJ." (sheet 144).

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"Item infrascriptis eorum ministris servientibus tam Florentie quam Pisis, pro dictis quatuor mensibus initiatis et finitis ut supra" (initiat. die "prima mensis novembris proxime preteriti" (at sheet 144'), (at sheet 145).

* * * * *

"Niccholao domini Bernardi de Machiavellis, fl. 33. 6. 8." (at sheet 145').

* * * * *

"Item infrascriptis eorum ministris ec, c. s., pro dictis quatuor mensibus initiatis ut supra (die prima mensis martii prox. preteriti (at sheet 145')," (at sheet 146').

* * * * *

"Niccholao ec, c. s."

After this time the Studio, with some of its records, was transferred to Pisa, only a few professorial chairs being retained in Florence. The *Libri dello Studio* for the years 1521-25 are wanting in the Pisan Archives; but in an account book there for the year 1526, at sheet 24f, we find these entries: "Ad li ministri (*dello Studio fiorentino e del pisano*):" "A Francesco del Nero fior. ottanta quattro di suggello, 84."

"A Niccolò Machiavelli fiorini centosettantacinque di suggello, 175."

The succeeding registers down to 1544 are missing. For the above entries, proving that the subsidy was continued for several years, we are indebted to Signor Tanfani Centofanti of the Pisan Archives.

Machiavelli at once set to work, but was naturally obliged to devote some time to preparatory studies, further prolonged by various interruptions. And then, from a quarter whence it was least to be expected, he actually received advice to refuse the task entrusted to him, in favour of another offer of a very different nature. Piero Soderini, the ex-Gonfalonier, after having written to him from Ragusa * to make suggestions that were apparently met by a refusal, ceased all communication with him on his return to Rome, nor do we find further records of any continued correspondence between them. On the contrary, we have seen what numerous precautions were employed by both, for the purpose of averting dangerous suspicions. Suddenly, however, Soderini broke the long silence, by writing to him from Rome on the 13th April, 1521: "Since the proposal I sent you from Ragusa did not suit you, I have taken the opportunity of suggesting your name to Prospero Colonna, who is in search of a secretary, and he has instantly accepted you, knowing that you are to be depended upon. The remuneration will consist of two hundred gold ducats and all your expenses. If this content you, set out at once, and without conferring with any one, so that your arrival may become known

* This letter, which is written in an almost unintelligible jargon, is No. xli. in the *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 147. It was transcribed by Ricci from the annotated but very obscure original. He does not state whether it was an autograph, and does not inform us who was the author of the marginal notes copied by him into the codex from which we have given many quotations. These notes, however, by no means lessen the obscurity of Soderini's letter.

before your departure. It would be impossible to find you anything better than this, and it seems to me decidedly preferable to remaining where you are, and writing histories at so many *sealed* florins a piece." * What could have caused this sudden revival of interest and unsolicited kindness, this strange contempt for an engagement to write histories, with a subsidy from the Florentine Studio, at a time when all Italian writers accepted the aid of wealthy patrons, and it was deemed an enviable honour to be the official historian of any State whether great or small? The explanation may easily be guessed. The Soderini, aided by the French, were, as we shall soon find, actually engaged in a plot against the Medici, and even the ex-Gonfalonier had laid aside his prolonged neutrality in order to take part in it. Hence it was natural that he should be very ill-pleased to find that his former secretary was, at this moment, gaining favour with the Medici, and natural that he should show all this eagerness to remove him from Florence. Prospero Colonna was in the service of the Spaniards, the enemies of the French; accordingly were it even discovered from whom Machiavelli had received this offer, its author would be in no way compromised, although secrecy was to be preferred, and was therefore strongly recommended.

But it was totally impossible for Machiavelli to accept so unexpected an offer, and one received at the very moment when his position in Florence was really on the

* This letter is in the *Opere* (P. M.), vol. i. p. lxxxix. The original is in the *Carte del Machiavelli*, case v. No. 40.

point of improvement. Barely quit of the old persecutions and suspicions, he ran the risk of having his property confiscated were he to leave the city suddenly, against the will of the Medici, and at the suggestion of their foes. For the Soderini were already declared enemies, although not yet known to be conspirators. Therefore Machiavelli not only continued his labours on the *Histories*, but also accepted another temporary commission entrusted to him by the Cardinal in a letter of the 11th May, 1521, signed by Niccolò Michelozzi, secretary of the *Eight di Pratica*. This obliged him to go to Carpi, where the full chapter of the Frati Minori was then sitting, to request, in the name of the Signory and the Cardinal, the separation of the Frati Minori established in the Florentine territory from the other brethren of that order in Tuscany, so that they might be subject to stricter superintendence and correction, for the advancement of religion and decorum, which were both lapsing into neglect among them.* And to add to the singularity of this commission, which was a very strange one to be given to Machiavelli, he had barely arrived at Carpi when he received another epistle, dated the 14th May, by which the Consuls of the Woollen Guild, who had the charge of Santa Maria del Fiore, begged him to obtain permission from the Superior of the Order for the coming to Florence of a certain Frà Roaio, whom they had invited to preach in the cathedral the following Lent.† Machiavelli seems to have taken the matter very lightly, and paid little or no attention to it, especially as Frà

* *Opere*, vol. vii. pp. 439-41.

† *Opere* (P. M.), vol. vi. pp. 215, 216.

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Rovaio himself seemed to have no desire to preach in Florence. And as to the decree of separation, although, even in the Cardinal's name, he urged it strongly upon the Minister-general and the assessors of the chapter, and the request was backed by two favourable briefs from the Pope, the friars quibbled over the sense of the words, and declared that the matter must be brought before the General Assembly. Whereupon, weary of an affair that, in his hands, seemed to assume a ridiculous aspect, he suddenly took his departure. On the road he halted for a few days at Modena, partly by the Cardinal's desire, in order to visit Guicciardini, who was papal governor in that city, and partly also because hasty riding was hurtful to him, as he was threatened with an attack of the stone.*

The sole importance of this mission consists in the correspondence exchanged during those days, between Machiavelli at Carpi and Guicciardini at Modena. They joked each other on the affair of the preacher and the monks, and Machiavelli, annoyed at being obliged to waste his time, vented his biting spirit of satire in the liveliest style. Guicciardini wrote on the 17th May, wishing him all success in the affair of the preacher and that he might satisfy the expectations of the Consuls of the Woollen Guild, "and in a way befitting your "honour, which would certainly be tarnished, if at your "age you gave yourself to devotion (*all'anima*),† for as

* *Vide* Machiavelli's letter to Cardinal de' Medici, in the *Opere*, vol. vii. pp. 445-449.

† The words in italics are missing from every edition of the *Opere*, and are indicated by dots. There is a note to the effect that the original manu-

"you have always professed contrary opinions, it will be supposed that you have become imbecile rather than good."

He hoped that his friend would make haste, since he ran two dangers by remaining there: "first *that you may catch hypocrisy from those monks*, secondly that the Carpi air may make you become a liar, since such is its "usual effect, not only in this age but for many centuries past." *

And Machiavelli replied to him the same day in the same ironical strain. His time was wasted in waiting for the monks to elect the general and assessors. Therefore he begged Guicciardini, when taking a drive, to push as far as Carpi to pay him a visit, or to at least send a second runner with a letter, since the monks would hold him in much higher consideration if they saw frequent messengers arrive for him.† "For I can tell you that at the sight of your crossbowman carrying the letter and bowing down to the ground and saying that he had been sent expressly and in haste, every one rose with so many reverences and so much noise that all was in a turmoil and many came to me to ask the news. And I, in order to swell my importance, replied: that the Emperor was waited at Trent, and that the

script must have fallen into the hands of some pious person, who erased from this and the following letter all the more licentious words and those most disrespectful to religion. But they are intact in the copy contained in the Ricci Codex, from which we have taken them.

* *Opere*, vol. viii. pp. 155, 156.

† Guicciardini really despatched a second courier, with a letter of the 18th May, 1521, that is among the *Carte del Machiavelli*, case v. No. 111. *Vide* Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document x.

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"Swiss had summoned new Diets, and that the King of France wished to seek an interview with the former sovereign ; but that these advisers of his dissuaded him from the journey. So all stood open-mouthed and cap in hand ; and as I write this I have a circle around me, who seeing me write at so much length are vastly astonished and gaze on me as on one possessed ; and I, to increase their astonishment, sometimes stop my pen and puff out my cheeks, and thereupon they foam at the mouth, and if they only knew what I am writing to you they would marvel still more."

Regarding the mendacity of the men of Carpi, and the hypocrisy of the monks, Machiavelli, with an irony that was positively cynical, replied that he had no fear of those things, since he was long passed master in them, so that even when he spoke the truth, he wrapped it in falsehoods.* And then followed a few more letters in

* *Opere*, vol. viii. pp. 156-169, letter lxi. Subjoined are the words that were suppressed in the printed versions, and in the same order as the breaks that are indicated by dots in this letter :

<i>predicatore ;</i>	<i>preacher ;</i>
<i>insegnasse la via</i>	<i>should teach the way</i>
<i>d'andare in casa il diavolo ;</i>	<i>to go to the devil ;</i>
<i>pazzo che il Ponzo, più versato che</i>	<i>as mad as Ponzo, wilier than</i>
<i>frà Girolamo, più ipocrito che</i>	<i>Frà Girolamo, more hypocritical</i>
<i>frate Alberto ;</i>	<i>than Frà Alberto ;</i>
<i>tristo ;</i>	<i>rascally ;</i>
<i>mantello della religione ;</i>	<i>cloak of religion ;</i>
<i>pestando i fanghi di S. Francesco ;</i>	<i>treading the mud of St. Francis ;</i>
<i>scandalo ;</i>	<i>scandal ;</i>
<i>alle soccolate ;</i>	<i>with sandal-kicks.</i>
<i>questi frati dicono che quando uno è</i>	<i>these friars declare that when one is</i>
<i>confermato in grazia, il diavolo non</i>	<i>well confirmed in grace, the devil has</i>
<i>ha più potenza di tentarlo. Così</i>	<i>no more power to tempt him. Ac-</i>

the same vein. Guicciardini, in a moment of comparative seriousness, wrote that Machiavelli's present condition reminded him of that of Lysander, obliged to distribute rations of meat to the very men he had led to victory.* He thought it deplorable that a man who had been employed on missions to so many kings and emperors should now be compelled to "play the lick-spittle to the sandalled Republic." He congratulated him on being commissioned to write the *Histories*, said that he was "*ut plurimum*, of more extravagant opinions than the generality, and an inventor of new and out-of-the-way things." He then resumed his jests.† Machiavelli replied in the same mirthful tone, and wound up by saying that, at least, he had been treated to excellent repasts and was quite filled out. And thus ended this commission which Guicciardini justly designated a farce. It could not go on any longer, for the monks were beginning to discover that Machiavelli was making fun of them.

Having returned to Florence, he applied himself to his history and other literary undertakings; but shortly after occurred the death of Leo X., with all the changes that necessarily ensued. Hostilities were suspended, for want of the Papal supplies, which had chiefly served to carry them on; the Spaniards were obliged to dismiss the

<i>is non ho paura che questi frati mi</i>	<i>cordingly I am not afraid of catching</i>
<i>appichino la ipocrisia, perchè io credo</i>	<i>hypocrisy of these monks, since I hold</i>
<i>essere assai ben confermato;</i>	<i>myself to be very well confirmed;</i>
<i>nè credo mai quel ch'è io dico; frà</i>	<i>nor do I ever believe that which I say;</i>
<i>tante bugie;</i>	<i>among so many lies;</i>

* He alludes to the account given by Plutarch in his *Life of Lysander*.

† Letter of the 18th May, 1521, *Opere*, vol. viii. pp. 159-161.

German infantry and nearly all the Swiss. This was the signal for the uprising of those who had long been trodden under foot. Francesco Maria della Rovere recovered Urbino, Pesaro, Montefeltro, and even St. Leo, which had already been given to the Florentines, although all that now remained to them was the district of Sestino. Sigismondo Varano, the former lord of Camerino, re-entered his State, and expelled his uncle, Giammaria, who had been installed in it by Leo X. Alfonso d'Este recovered nearly all his dominions, but could not regain Modena and Reggio; and Parma, defended in the interests of the Papacy by its governor, Francesco Guicciardini, repulsed an attack upon its walls. Later, Malatesta and Orazio Baglioni both returned to Perugia. Meanwhile, the Conclave had arrived at no decision after a fortnight's session. Cardinal Wolsey, Cardinal de' Medici, Cardinal Soderini, and others were candidates for the Papal See. Matters dragged on so slowly that Medici, who perceived that his own hour had not yet struck, and that even his power in Florence was endangered by his lengthened absence, proposed a foreign candidate, who was far away and almost unknown. The proposal was accepted, and Adrian Dedel, a native of Utrecht, Cardinal of Tortosa and former preceptor of Charles V., was duly elected and assumed the name of Adrian VI.

So great was the indignation of the people at the election of this foreign Pope, that many wrote over their doors: *Roma est locanda*. And the discontent became general when Adrian was personally known. Born on

the 2nd March, 1459, raised to the papacy on the 9th January, 1522, he could not speak the language of the Italians, and pronounced Latin in a fashion that was almost unintelligible to them. Being a man of culture and of spotless habits, he reduced the expenses of his Court to the lowest possible sum. But this measure only served to increase his unpopularity. His aim was to devote himself earnestly to religion and Church reform ; to abjure festivities and drive away poets and artists ; but no one heeded his exhortations. He found himself suddenly transplanted to an entirely unknown world, where no one understood him, no one loved him. Pasquin cut continual jokes at his expense, and instead of laughing at them like the Romans, he was so highly enraged by them, that one day he wished to have the statue cast into the Tiber. But the Duke of Sessa warned him that Pasquin would go on speaking all the same, since, like the frogs, he was quite capable of talking under water. All Romans, and especially the artists and *litterati* who were now deprived of court patronage, were furious against the new Pope and his favourites, whose very names were unpronounceable.

Ecco che personaggi, ecco che Corte,
Che brigate, galanti cortigiane,
Copis, Vinci, Corizio e Trincheforte,
Nomi da far sbigottire un cane.*

So wrote Berni in his Capitolo against the election

* "Behold what personages, what a pretty court, what a gallant string of courtiers ! Copis, Vinci, Corizio and Trincheforte ! Names fitted to scare a dog !" Berni, *Opere Burlesche*. London, 1723, vol. i. p. 77.

of the new Pope, and the forty "*poltroon*" Cardinals who had voted for Adrian, and whom the satirical poet overwhelmed with invectives. Accordingly Adrian VI. gained nothing but unhappiness from his tiara, but fortunately had not to bear its burden long, since on the 14th September, 1523, he drew his last breath. Thereupon there was great rejoicing in the Eternal city, and the door of the physician who had attended him,* was decorated with garlands, and the inscription : *Ob Urbem servatam.*

Meanwhile novelties of another sort were occurring in Florence. Cardinal de' Medici was a prudent ruler, and even in the opinion of patriots like Nardi, succeeded better than had been expected, and decidedly better than Giuliano and Lorenzo, who had bestowed little or no attention on the city. For the Cardinal was gentlemanly, sharp witted and patient, sufficiently cautious in his habits to avoid scandal, fond of the city and anxious for its embellishment. He constructed a canal to prevent the overflow of the Arno, he fortified the town walls, and without being a great Mæcnas, gave his patronage to scholars and artists.† Nevertheless he had many and perilous enemies. There were the lovers of liberty in Florence, and the Soderini without, to whom he was now an object of the fiercest hatred. The latter had never forgiven the Medici their broken promise

* Gregorovius, *Geschichte*, vol. viii. p. 392 and fol. ; De Leva, *Storia di Carlo V.*, lib. ii. chap. iii. ; Ranke, *Die Römischen Päpste*, lib. i. chap. iii. ; Reumont, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom.*, lib. viii. part ii. ; Constantin Ritter von Höfler, *Papst Adrian VI. (1522-23)*, Wien, Braumüller, 1880.

† Nardi, *Storia*, vol. ii. pp. 73, 75.

of a matrimonial alliance. Cardinal Soderini had been concerned in Petrucci's conspiracy against Leo X., and had been a very active rival of Cardinal de' Medici in the last Conclave. The same rivalry would be inevitable on the death of Adrian. For all these reasons the Soderini, who had first joined the French in order to combat Medici's election, now made a still firmer alliance against him, in order to oppose his government in Florence, where, being aided therein by the ex-Gonfalonier, they succeeded in winning numerous adherents.

The gravest discontent had arisen among the youths frequenting the meetings in the Oricellarii Gardens, although nearly all had originally been partisans of the Medici. As easily happened in those days, some had been alienated by purely personal reasons ; others like Zanobi Buondelmonti, Luigi Alamanni, Jacopo da Diacceto, men of classical training, and animated by an ardent desire to accomplish something extraordinary that should make their names famous, had been gradually worked up to a pitch of exaltation by listening to the teachings of Machiavelli. The latter, who was now over fifty years of age, and certainly never thought of conspiracy, was not aware that his writings, and still more his spoken words, had produced on the minds of these youthful hearers any other than a merely literary or scientific effect. He continued to address them enthusiastically on the subject of the Roman Republic and Italy, of the nation in arms, of great men exalted to heaven on a level with the gods, for having sacrificed substance, life and soul to their country. And meanwhile certain

of his hearers began to come to an understanding with the Soderini, and to join in their plots, without breathing a syllable of it to him or to their other associates, many of whom were still friends of the Cardinal and frequentors of his halls. And the Cardinal himself, whether in good or ill faith, had also aided in inflaming the minds of these youths. Whether it was that he actually meditated carrying out the theory expounded to him by Machiavelli, and re-organizing the Republic in such a way that at his death it might become really independent; whether the speedy hope of attaining to the papal crown made him think of the time when Florence would be deprived of his presence, and with no legitimate heirs to succeed him; or whether—and this is quite probable—he sought to discover the names of the malcontents by fomenting their illusions, it is positive that he interrogated many on the manner of re-constituting and re-organizing the Republic, seemed to receive their replies with avidity and to study them with care. Then, to inspire all with additional faith in his words, he allowed himself to be continually seen pacing his own garden in the company of the poet Girolamo Benivieni, the ardent follower of Savonarola.*

Thus it came about that new proposals of reform were presented to him by Zanobi Buondelmonti, Alessandro de' Pazzi and Niccolò Machiavelli. The first of these proposals no longer exists, but was seen and has been recorded by Nerli. That of Pazzi, which was afterwards published, suggested a perpetual Gonfalonier, a Grand

* Nardi, *Storia di Firenze*, vol. ii. pp. 74, 75.

Council and a Senate composed of life members, sitting in rotation and having the chief power in their hands.* And as was natural in an upholder of aristocratic government, Pazzi did not approve of the proposal already made to Leo X. by Machiavelli. But the latter now renewed it to the Cardinal, with certain modifications rendering it more explicit and giving it exactly the form of a decree.

"Our High and Magnificent Lords (Magnifici ed "Eccelsi Signori), considering that there can be nothing "more praiseworthy than the ordering of a united and "free republic, in which all private interests yield to the "common welfare, and the cravings of vain-glory are "extinguished, being comforted and encouraged by our "most Reverend Lord His Eminence Cardinal Giulio "de' Medici, and invoking the name of the Almighty, do "provide and decree, etc." Thus ran the first sentence of the proposed decree, re-confirming the Greater Council in the authority it held before 1512; providing for the election of a Gonfalonier every three years, annulling the Councils of the People, the Commune and the Hundred, transforming the Council of Sixty into a senate or new Council of the Hundred, with the same powers held by the Eighty previous to 1512. Machiavelli also desired that the Signori in office should elect twelve citizens over forty-five years of age, in whom, together with the Cardinal, would be temporarily vested the whole authority of the Florentine people for the making of

* *Vide the Discorso of Pazzi in the Archivio Storico*, vol. i. p. 420 and fol.

new laws and statutes. But in order that this measure might prove really beneficial to liberty, this Council extraordinary was only to last for one year, without power of prorogation or renewal.*

At this time Machiavelli also composed another short pamphlet on the burgher militia, trying to prove that the only way to obtain a good Ordinance was by re-constituting it on a larger scale as in the time of Soderini, instead of reducing it to a handful of armed men, as had been done by the Medici, since that made it practically useless.†

There was great belief in the goodness of the Cardinal's intentions. Filippo de' Nerli, a frequenter of the Oricellarii Gardens, but always a firm adherent to the *Palle*, relates how divided the city was at that time, and how much men's minds were relieved by these new expectations. After telling us that, in consequence of this, several projects of reform were prepared, he adds: "Zanobi Buondelmonti and even Niccolò Machiavelli showed their minds very plainly in this way; for I saw

* This second project of reform, from Machiavelli's pen, was first brought out by A. d'Ancona in a pamphlet published on the occasion of the Cavaliere-Zabban marriage, 16th October, 1872, and entitled: *Due Scritture di Niccolò Machiavelli*. Pisa, Nistri, 1872. It was afterwards republished in Signor Amico's *Vita di N. Machiavelli*, p. 550 and fol. The original is among the *Carte del Machiavelli*, case i. No. 79.

† This autograph composition is among the *Carte del Machiavelli*, case i. No. 63. *Vide* Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xi. Signor Amico gave a fragment of it at p. 269 of his *Vita di N. Machiavelli*. He considers it to be the rough sketch of a letter written to Cardinal Soderini when the Ordinance was first established. But an attentive perusal shows it to be no letter, but a proposal addressed to the Cardinal in order to re-establish the Ordinance for the second time.

their writings and all went into the hands of the Cardinal, who pretended to value them very highly. Alessandro de' Pazzi wrote a very beautiful and elegant Latin oration, expressive of the people's gratitude to the Cardinal for the restoration of the Republic, and it was read with much applause, in the presence of many citizens at a supper." He goes on to say that matters were pushed so far that the Cardinal began to desire to check them, and no longer knew how to do so.* But although Jacopo Nardi spoke of the Cardinal's administration, in his *Histories*, in very laudatory terms, he plainly accuses him of "deceit" on this occasion, and says that "he abused the good faith of certain, perhaps over-credulous, citizens, who were all the more easily tricked by seeing that he gave no ear to the complaints and remonstrances of trusty adherents, by whom he was warned that he was playing a dangerous game." The Cardinal's real intentions only began to be apparent when Pazzi presented him with the oration in praise of the restoration of liberty. For he replied that he was too much occupied at that moment to have time to read it; that it had better be consigned to Niccolò della Magna. And this individual, the German Niccolò Schomberg, who was in the Cardinal's secrets, coldly remarked after reading it: "I am truly pleased with "your oration, but cannot approve of its subject."†

* Filippo de' Nerli, *Commentarii*, pp. 137, 138.

† Nardi, vol. ii. pp. 83, 84. Also Jacopo Pitti gives a full account of all this affair in his *Storia Fiorentina*, lib. ii. p. 122. (*Archivio Storico*, vol. i.) He says that the decree for the reformed government was drawn up, and at

Then it was clearly seen that the very reverend Monsignore had made a fine use of his craft, and deceived ingenuous minds, without however entrapping those who were more keen-witted. In fact, at the last Conclave, he had realized that the hatred of the Soderini was inextinguishable, that they were engaged in some plot, conjointly with the French and some of his own personal enemies in Florence, and, as we have seen, this had forced him to hasten his return. He certainly could not be ignorant that Battista della Palla, having been refused certain favours he had sought to obtain, was no longer a friend but a foe of the Medici, that he was now tarrying in Rome to confer with the Soderini and carrying on an active correspondence with Florence. But it was not easy to discover to whom he wrote nor what he was scheming.

After the death of Leo X., Malatesta and Orazio Baglioni, accompanied by the Duke of Urbino, had entered the Sienese territory, in order to attempt the overthrow of the government. They had been urged to this enterprise by Cardinal Soderini, who, being an enemy of Petrucci, the Medicean governor of that city, hoped, by this preliminary step, to facilitate the expulsion of the Medici from Florence. Cardinal Giulio defeated this enterprise by means of his Swiss and German mercenaries; and afterwards succeeded in engaging the Baglioni themselves and the Duke of Urbino in his service. But before

p. 124 he epitomizes it, giving a summary of the very *provisione* that Machiavelli had written, thus proving that the latter had prepared it by the Cardinal's authorization.

long another expedition was made against Siena, also at the instigation of Cardinal Soderini, by Lorenzo Orsini of the Roman Campagna, nicknamed Renzo da Ceri, who marched forward at the head of his vassals. And a small band of French soldiery set out from Genoa for the same purpose. But this second attempt likewise was quickly repressed, for the Cardinal had been careful to hire an adequate force of foot-soldiers and men-at-arms. The French were recalled on account of the bad turn their affairs were taking in Lombardy, and the Conclave which, pending the arrival of Adrian, still exercised authority in Rome, showed itself hostile to the enterprise. Thereupon Renzo da Ceri lost courage to proceed and retraced his steps.*

These facts furnished abundant proofs that the Medici counted many adversaries both within and without the walls of Florence; adversaries, too, of abundant courage and resource. It was to discover the names of these enemies that the Cardinal continued to promote still livelier discussions on the reconstitution of the Republic. And this measure was neither wanting in sagacity, nor altogether unsuccessful. For the poet Luigi Alamanni, Zanobi Buondelmonti, Jacopo da Diaceto and other youths of the Oricellarii Gardens, were banded with Soderini in a plot against his life. Battista della Palla was their agent in Rome, and they only awaited the success of Renzo da Ceri's expedition to unsheath their daggers. And when this hope failed them, the

* Nardi, *Storia*, vol. ii. p. 85; Capponi, *Storia della repubblica di Firenze*, vol. ii. p. 336; Pitti, *Storia fiorentina*, p. 125.

better to avoid detection, they were louder than others in their acclamations of the generosity shown by the Cardinal in promising to give Florence a republic. In this way they not only sought to save their lives, but to achieve freedom, without running the risk of a conspiracy that had no longer any chance of success.* But as many others expressed the same opinions with entire sincerity, it was not yet possible for the Cardinal to distinguish his friends from his enemies.

Chance, however, came to his aid. A courier was captured just at this time who had conveyed despatches and intelligence between Battista della Palla and the conspirators in Florence. This man confessed to having spoken with Jacopo da Diacceto, who was instantly cast into prison. The poet Luigi Alamanni, who had taken a prominent part in the conspiracy, happened to be in the country and was warned in time. So hurried was his flight, that he forgot to give the alarm to his cousin Luigi di Tommaso Alamanni, who was also in the plot, and was staying in Arezzo,

* "But when Signor Renzo's attempt did not succeed as was expected "by the conspirators, who were waiting to execute their design until that "enterprise should have some happy result, but on the contrary failed, then "Zanobi and Luigi found themselves implicated in the plot without being "able to carry it out; and fearing lest it should be discovered through their "having talked of it too freely, were therefore foremost among those "who urgently solicited the Cardinal de' Medici to carry out the "designs related above and all the vain speeches that were going round as "to the new government reforms, inasmuch as it seemed to them that "if this could be achieved, they would be secured against all danger from "the discovery of their plot, which could be ill carried into effect now that "the Cardinal de' Medici had contrived to parry the attack of Signor Renzo "in the way that we have seen." Nerli, *Commentarii*, p. 138.

where he was captured. Zanobi Buondelmonti was strolling through the city with Filippo de' Nerli when he learnt that all was discovered. He ran to his own house to hide, but his wife gave him all the money she had, and persuaded him to fly. Accordingly, he first fled to the Garfagnana, where his friend Ludovico Ariosto was then governor; and afterwards, in company with Alamanni, sought refuge in France. Summary justice meanwhile was being dealt in Florence. Jacopo da Diacceto, on being put to the torture, unhesitatingly confessed: "I wish to rid myself of 'this pumpkin of a body: we intended to kill the 'Cardinal.'" And he added that they had decided to do so from no hatred towards him, but for love of liberty, and because they knew that he lied when promising them reforms.* The trial ended, Diacceto and Luigi di Tommaso Alamanni were both beheaded before daybreak on the 7th June, 1522. Fresh investigations and decrees of punishment then followed. Nearly all the Soderini were proclaimed rebels; the ex-Gonfalonier was cited before the tribunal, but as he died on the 13th June, his property was confiscated, and his memory sentenced to damnation.† Some other individuals were

* Nardi, *Storia*, vol. ii. p. 89.

† *Et mortuus non posset damnari*, so runs the sentence. *Vide* the documents relating to this conspiracy, published in the *Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani*, vol. iii. p. 123 and fol. Florence, Vieuksseux. The sentence relating to Piero Soderini is at pp. 133, 134. He died and was buried in Rome. In the choir of the Carmine church in Florence, which was built by his family, there is a monument by Benedetto da Rovezzano, which it is said was intended by Soderini for his own sepulchre.

also taken and tried, but without anything further being discovered, since the only real culprits were already either dead or in exile. Cardinal Soderini did not desist from plotting with the French against the Spaniards ; but Adrian VI., who already, if with much moderation, openly favoured the latter, soon put an end to this by imprisoning him in the Castle of St. Angelo. And thus tranquillity was re-established even in Florence, and nothing more was heard of the promised restoration of liberty.

This plot, and its sanguinary repression, naturally dispersed the society of the Orti Oricellarii. By great good luck no suspicion fell upon Machiavelli, although some blame attached to him for the discourses by which, even if involuntarily, he had inflamed the minds of his younger and more impetuous hearers. Nevertheless, Cardinal de' Medici did not deprive him of his favour, but his speedy election to the pontificate left the government of Florence, as we shall see, in the clumsy grasp of the Cardinal of Cortona, who ruled the city in the Pope's name with less judgment and greater obduracy. All these reasons combined to call Machiavelli back to a quieter life in his country house. It was there that he worked at his *Histories* and completed various other literary works, among which his comedies occupy the first rank. Of these latter it now behoves us to speak.

CHAPTER IX.

General condition of the Italian stage—The miracle plays (*Sacre Rappresentazioni*)—The *Comedy of art* and the *Comedy of learning*—The comedies of Ariosto—The *Calandria* of Cardinal Bibbiena—The comedies of Machiavelli—The *Mandragola*, the *Clizia*, the *Comedy in prose*, the *Comedy in verse*, the translation of the *Andria*.

AS all know, Italy has possessed more than one comic writer and several tragic poets of the highest merit, but has had nothing that can truly be called a national stage. At the period when the Romans might have derived original and national comedy from their ancient popular farces and comic and satiric performances, the Mimes and the Atellanæ, they devoted themselves to imitations of Greek plays from which neither the genius of Terence nor Plautus availed to emancipate them. Thus a literary theatre arose, that was without any popular foundation, and the people therefore continued to prefer the Mimes and Atellanæ. These old-world farces, although gradually changing, were still in existence in the Middle Ages, when, being fused into and grafted upon the Miracle Plays, they finally introduced a lay element into the latter and withdrew them from church and cloister. Later they gave birth to the so-called *Commedia dell' arte*, which became increasingly popular, and was already very general among us during

the Renaissance. This was almost entirely improvised by the actors who were furnished with nothing but the *scenario*, or subject, general plot, and skeleton framework of the different scenes, indicating the character of the part to be played by each personage, and the salient points of the principal dialogues. The masks (or conventional personages) of this *Commedia dell' arte*, Pantaloon, Harlequin, Punch and Brighella, are probably slowly transformed survivals of the characters of the Mimes and Atellanæ.

Then, during the Renaissance there came about something very similar to that which had formerly taken place in Rome. Both from the *Sacre Rappresentazioni* which had already attained a notable literary development, and from the already flourishing *Commedia dell' arte*, a national drama and comedy might easily have been derived, had not men reverted instead to imitations of the tragedy and comedy of the ancient world. In an age when scepticism invaded every mind, when all political institutions were in process of dissolution, when the nation was incapable of reconstituting itself, and the torrent of foreign invasion was setting in, genuine epic inspiration and truly tragic feeling were alike impossible. The *Sofonisba* of Trissino and the *Rosmunda* of Rucellai were the best tragedies of the period; but although of considerable merit, containing some genuinely lyrical bursts, and occasional flashes of dramatic power, they adhered too closely to the pattern of the ancients, had no real life of their own, and never led to other and better works.

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But as, all public disasters notwithstanding, there was even too much mirth in Italy at that time, comedy fared better than tragedy, although likewise clad in borrowed plumes chiefly plucked from Terence and Plautus. This, the so-called comedy of learning, was widely diffused among literary court circles, and wore an increasing resemblance to the *Commedia dell' arte*. Yet it preserved a physiognomy of its own, and while conferring no little improvement and correction upon the *Comedy of art*, gained from it in exchange a sensible increase of liveliness and spontaneity. Nevertheless the learned comedy was always the production of *litterati* and a labour of imitation, and so the people continued to prefer the *Comedy of art*, which never entirely lost its primitive stamp even when beginning to be somewhat artificial.

There has been much discussion as to the causes that precluded the Italy of the Renaissance from founding a genuine national theatre or at least a national comedy at a time when there was so great an abundance of the requisite materials. Certainly the *Commedia dell' arte* showed no lack of vivacity and fertility of invention, and the *Commedia erudita* was also replete with an inexhaustible wealth of the same comic spirit that abounded in almost every Italian tale and in much of the poetry of the period. On the other hand, many branches of our literature were imitative in the beginning, and then, owing to their intrinsic vigour and vitality, rose to independence and achieved a genuine national originality of their own. How was it then that our theatre could

not reach the same goal? The truth may be that there is no reason why a nation which has been successful in many things should be equally fortunate in all. To form a national theatre it is requisite that the social and national life should be already formed and developed; and Italy was not yet moulded into a nation when the tide of foreign invasion swept everything aside, suffocated liberty and hastened the general decadence. Besides, the formation of a theatre demands the liberal participation of the public; almost, indeed, the co-operation of the masses, who in this as in many other branches of composition, prepare the poetic material into which great writers infuse new life. And it should also be remembered that the original, vigorous and complete development of popular poetry was frequently hindered in Italy by the continual and incessant action that, owing to the slight division of social classes, was exercised by literary upon popular art.

For in this country, before any one species of popular composition attains sufficient maturity to give birth to a new form of national poetry, it already begins to decay and yields the soil to the *litterati* pressing forward to cultivate it. The latter know how to profit by every popular element; indeed it has been mainly by aid of this sort that classic imitation in Italy has frequently risen to the height of a genuine renaissance. But exactly at the point where the popular element should of right prevail, owing to the need for the origination of a new and national poetic stock, our literature has still greater obstacles to encounter. Nor is it

surprising that it should be unable to overcome them when—as was certainly the case with our stage in the sixteenth century—the political conditions of the land are equally hostile.

Such were the reasons why, during the Italian Renaissance, the Sacred Drama became charged with classical reminiscences, literary and conventional forms, before reaching its plenitude of popular vitality ; namely, before it could furnish great writers with material for new creations. The *Comedy of art* had also been polished, modified and altered after the pattern of the *Comedy of learning*. And the latter, without entirely foregoing imitation of Plautus and Terence, was continually straining after the popular element. More than once it seemed on the point of success ; an original national comedy appeared to be at last arising ; but then imitation quickly regained the upper hand and either the artificial or the plebeian element again prevailed. Thus we never obtained any grasp of the genuine comedy of Aristophanes or Molière.

Being an easy writer, Terence was enormously copied in Italy ; but the influence exercised by Plautus on our stage was by no means slight. Although much rougher, the latter is decidedly superior as a comic writer. With the psychologic insight of an experienced judge of human nature, his representation of character, the power and variety with which he reproduces the countless aspects of town life, and above all his manifest genius for displaying the weaker sides of men's actions and characters, with a daring superiority that turns all things

to ridicule, are the distinguishing qualities that rendered him so popular in Italy. As Mommsen observes, Plautus pulls the strings of his comic plot with great judgment and biting wit; his standpoint is the tavern, which in his plays is always seen to be in antagonism with the home. Terence, on the contrary, plants himself in the house-place, among good people of the better classes; he studies truth to nature, even at the risk of tediousness; he is of a calm and tranquil disposition, and his comedies show us a higher conception of woman and of the married state. Plautus paints his characters with broad strokes of the brush; while the psychologic analysis of Terence is a genuine miniature. In the former's plays, sons are continually turning their fathers into ridicule, and his dialogue is full of quips and conceits; those of the latter have almost educational aims, and his smooth and ornate style has subtlety and elegance of movement. His weak side is that of invention, but he supplies the lack of it by art.

Our learned men speedily began to produce both in Italian and Latin, imitations, translations and paraphrases, of these two comic writers. In Rome, Pomponius Letus was one of the first to give performances of the ancient plays by the members of his Roman Academy. The Academy of the *Rozzi* in Siena quickly followed his lead, and its example was everywhere taken by a great many other associations, such as the *Infiammati*, *Infocati*, *Intronati*, *Immobili*, *Costanti*, etc. But this movement received its first impulse from, and was chiefly centred in Ferrara, under the patronage of the Duke of that

State. It was at Ferrara that a translation of the *Menæchmi* of Plautus was performed in public as early as the year 1486. And just as at Ferrara our romantic poetry first assumed its true shape by the fusion of old French romance with learning; so the grafting of Plautus and Terence upon national and popular elements in the same city gave birth to the new comedy initiated by Lodovico Ariosto, before he earned lasting fame by his *Orlando Furioso*.

The manner in which this poet successively composed his five comedies is an epitome of the history of the Italian comic stage. He began by translations from the Latin that are now lost, and then applied himself to original plays. His *Cassaria*, written in 1498, bristles with imitations from Terence; his next work, *I Suppositi*, was founded upon the *Captives* and the *Eunuch* fused into one. And the author declares in his prologue that "not only in the fashioning, but even in the arguments of his fables, it is his purpose to imitate the celebrated ancient poets to the utmost extent of his ability." Nevertheless he places the action of the *Suppositi* in Ferrara, at the time of the capture of Otranto by the Turks; makes frequent allusion to contemporary matters, and gives his dialogue an independent vitality of its own. These two comedies, originally written in prose, were afterwards versified by the author. And his other plays were also in verse; for in verse Ariosto had a style of his own, simple, natural and original, and naturally felt more at home in his proper element. Nevertheless, this withdrew him from the path marked out for Italian

comedy, which was nearly always in prose, on account of the necessary reproduction of familiar dialogue. In his *Lena* both subject and characters are of the sixteenth century. Most original of the five are the two last, the *Negromante* and the *Scolastica*. In these we are among the students of Ferrara and Padova, and in the thick of their love-affairs. The corruption of Italian society is shown to us unveiled and the author's satire scourges the manners of the time : the men who paint their faces like women, the needy struggling to appear rich, the rulers of the land with their wolf-like rapacity, the priests that cause scandal of all kinds, and the Popes that traffic in indulgences.

In this way the comedy of learning freed itself from the shackles of the academicians, acquired independence and truth to nature, and came into closer contact with the social life of its time. It was animated by the biting and satiric spirit, by the huge simplicity and sensuousness so peculiarly characteristic of the Italian literature of the *Cinquecento*, and that were fostered by study and imitation of Plautus. The comedies of the Renaissance depend almost wholly on their plots, and are often composed by the intermixture of several ancient plays, which were usually character-pieces. The most admirable quality of Ariosto's plays consists in his vivid portraiture of the times, and his satiric treatment of them. For his satire is little more than a gentle irony, by which he, who is himself an integrant of the age he describes, enjoys his laugh at all things. In these plays we can discern the genius of a great poet, the inaugurator of a new style of com-

position ; but we also realize that he is destined and is already girding himself for a different and greater labour. For notwithstanding the marvellous spontaneity and simplicity of his verse, the private and domestic character of Italian comedy can only assume its true shape in the freedom of prose dialogue. Besides, that which chiefly attracts Ariosto's attention and impresses his imagination, that which he places most clearly before us, is the plot, the continual succession of events, the outer presentment of his personages. He has neither the desire nor the ability to dedicate much time to the analysis of any character or passion. A great variety of episodes, often without any unity, or only such as is derived from perpetual change ; a throng of personages, all life-like while present, but disappearing without enacting anything of importance, all this warns us that these plays were preparatory studies for the immortal genius of the creator of *Orlando Furioso*. It would seem as though the mighty poem were already stirring in his fancy, already throbbing with vigorous young life and impatient to emerge into the light. It might be said to have granted the poet no peace, to have hurried him onward, and altered the character of the work that he had still on hand.

The *Calandria* of Cardinal Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena, composed in the first decade of the sixteenth century, made a great sensation in the world. It was held by many to have initiated the new style of Italian comedy ; but this is not the case, for the *Calandria* had been already preceded by several of Ariosto's comedies,

and was decidedly inferior to them. Bibbiena, however, was a Cardinal, a Tuscan, and very facetious ; he was no poet, but he tried to write in a familiar style to catch the public ear, and he succeeded in doing so. People, Pope, cardinals, the weightiest personages of his time alike welcomed his play with laughter and applause. It had a positively enormous success. In the prologue the author states that he does not use verse, "because comedy represents familiar deeds and speech, and because prose can be spoken with free and unfettered words." He also begs his hearers to excuse him if the comedy is not ancient, inasmuch as modern things give greater pleasure ; he also excuses himself for not having written it in Latin, on the score that he desires to be understood by all, and the tongue that God and Nature have given us is worthy of no less esteem than Latin, Greek and Hebrew.*

All this proves the magnitude of the change that had then come over the public taste. Yet the *Calandria* is taken from the *Menaechmi* of Plautus, with the sole difference that the male twins, exactly resembling each other, are replaced by a brother and sister who are also twins, and so precisely alike that on changing clothes, each is easily mistaken for the other. This resemblance, and the foolishness of Calandro, who falls in love with the youth in the belief that he is the girl, serve to create a thousand farcical, comical and very indecent blunders that were marvellously suited to the

* *Vide* the prologue of the *Calandria* in the *Teatro italiano antico*, vol. i. pp. 195-197. Milan, Printing Association of the Italian Classics.

taste of the time. The fact of its being written by a Cardinal increased its effect ; and both the Pope and the Sacred College received it with laughter and applause. But there is nothing new or modern about the *Calandria* excepting its outline, and the vivacity and spontaneity of the Tuscan dialogue, which, however, is occasionally too diffuse and monotonous. The play hinges almost entirely upon tricks that are ludicrous and obscene rather than really comic. The personages are shadowy, and the incidents never rise to true dramatic or comic power, because everything turns upon the excessive imbecility of Calandro, who can be made to believe anything. In short, it is little more than a farce stuffed with gross and obscene jests. The great vogue it obtained may chiefly be ascribed to the manner in which it was placed upon the stage ; and it is easy to understand that the clever actors engaged in its performance were able to make a sixteenth century audience crack their jaws with laughter over it. The *Calandria* marks the moment when, by treading on the heels of the comedy of art, the comedy of learning and plagiarism had discovered its suitable form in prose dialogue. It is this that gives Cardinal Bibbiena's work a post of historic importance in our literature.*

* Besides the best-known histories of Italian literature, see A. D'Ancona's *Origini del Teatro in Italia*, 3 vols. Florence, Le Monnier, 1872. Herr Ruth's *Geschichte der Italienischen Poesie* (Leipzig, 1847, 2 vols.) is a work of real merit and worthy of perusal, for if seldom quoted, it has often been pillaged. Prof. Karl Hillebrand is one of the few writers who have done justice to this work, and mentions it in his "*Études historiques et littéraires*" (Paris, Franck, 1868), in which he gives a masterly account of the Italian stage. See, too, the diligent work, entitled "*L'imitazione*

But the writer who, next to Ariosto, deserves the place of honour for having endowed Italian comedy with its true form, is undoubtedly Machiavelli, whose *Mandragola* surpassed all the plays that had preceded it. We have already seen by his writings, and especially by his private correspondence, that he was possessed of great comic and satiric power; and that he had a strong bent for dramatic composition was also proved as early as 1504, by his attempt to imitate the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, in writing the *Maschere*, a work that has now perished, in which he applied the lash to his contemporaries. But all this was not enough to lead any one to suppose him capable of giving us the *Mandragola*, which is the finest comedy of the Italian stage; and one that, according to Macaulay, is superior to the best of Goldoni's plays, and only inferior to the greatest of Molière's.

The action of the *Mandragola*, apparently suggested by an incident that occurred in Florence, is placed in

classica nella Commedia italiana del secolo XVI. It is a prize essay, by Dr. Vincenzo de Amicis, published in the *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, vol. ii. Pisa, Nistri, 1873. And several years later appeared the *Studii Drammatici* of Prof. Arturo Graf (Turin, Loescher, 1878). These consist of three essays: on the *Calandria* of Bibbiena, the *Mandragola* of Machiavelli, and the *Candelaio* of Giordano Bruno. Much information is also to be found in Klein's great work: *Geschichte des Drama's*, which in vol. iv. (Leipzig, 1866) begins to treat of the Italian stage. But this work is so diffuse and confused, and (putting aside its often extraordinary style) mingles valuable information with so much that is heterogeneous and useless, that it is extremely difficult to gain much assistance from it. Prof. Graf has made good use both of Klein and of Ruth, just as Prof. de Amicis has made very great use of Ruth. And in conclusion, we may quote the two concluding volumes of Mr. J. A. Symonds' excellent work, *The Renaissance in Italy*.

the year 1504.* But the prologue clearly indicates that the play was composed at a much later date, and certainly after 1512, during the dreariest period of Machiavelli's life. Giovio tells us, in his *Elogia doctorum virorum*, that Leo X. having heard of the great success of the *Mandragola* in Florence, had it performed in Rome by the same actors.† And from a letter of Battista della Palla, dated 26th April, 1520, we see that all was then in readiness for this performance before the Pope.‡ Therefore the comedy had been already played in Florence previously to this date. The oldest printed edition of which, according to bibliographers, the date is considered exact, must have been published in Rome in the August of 1524;§ but it seems certain that there

* In the first scene Callimaco states that he has lived twenty years in Paris, and that at the end of half of that period occurred the entry of Charles VIII. into Italy. As this event took place in 1494, ten years more brings us to the year 1504.

† . . . "in Nicia præsertim comoedia, in qua adeo incunde vel in tristibus risum excitavit, ut illi ipsi ex persona scite expressa, in scaenam inducti cives, quanquam præalte commorderentur, totam inustæ notæ iniuriam, civili lenitate pertulerint: actamque Florentiæ, ex ea miri leporis fama, Leo pontifex, instaurato ludo, ut Urbi ea voluptas communicaretur, cum toto scenæ cultu, ipsisque histrionibus Romam acciverit." *Elogia doctorum virorum*, autore Paulo Jovio, lxxvii. Nicolaus Macchiavellus.

‡ This letter is among the Machiavelli papers, and was published in the *Opere* (P. M.), vol. i. p. lxxxix. Among other matters contained in it, Della Palla writes to Machiavelli from Rome, that he finds the Pope very well disposed towards him, and inclined to give him some commission to write or to do other things. This Battista della Palla, now so high in the Pope's favour, is he who afterwards conspired against the Medici.

§ A copy of this edition exists in St. Mark's library at Venice, cxxxiii., B 8-48010. It has no date, but is bound up with another comedy, entitled *Aristippia*, of precisely the same form, type, paper, division of words, numeration, etc., and dated *Rome 1524 in the month of August*. For this reason Gamba and others have judged the edition of the *Mandragola* to be

are others still older among those without any date. But there is no evidence that the rumoured performance of Machiavelli's *Mandragola*, in the presence of Leo X. at the Oricellarii Gardens, ever took place, and indeed it seems incredible. It was probably confused with the *Rosmunda* of Rucellai.

To us the *Mandragola* has a double importance, for on the one hand it makes us acquainted with Machiavelli's comic power in its highest splendour and originality, and on the other shows us from a new point of view and in a different light, his conception of the men and society of his day. He exhibits this society to us as in a photograph, and parades it before our eyes with almost cynical mirth. Nevertheless his reckless gaiety is sometimes interrupted by a sudden burst of tears that is hastily checked, and then—as if ashamed of his emotion—he tries to make us believe that it was almost a burst of laughter. If you would learn, so he says in the prologue, why the author devotes himself to subjects too light for one wishing to be judged a man of gravity and wisdom,—

also of the year 1524. The title runs thus : *Comedia | facetissima | intitolata | Mandragola | et recitata in Firenze*. This Roman edition makes us infer the existence of some earlier Florentine one. In fact, the National Library of Florence possesses a copy of another old edition in 8vo among the books of the Magliabecchiana (k. 7. 58). Its sheets 1 and 4 are missing, and a description is given of it in Fossi's catalogue (vol. iii. col. 105), stating that as a lily is to be traced in the water-mark of the paper, it is believed to be of Florentine publication. Brunet attributes it to the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century, and adds : " Elle doit être la première de l'ouvrage." But in no case can it be of the fifteenth century.

Scusatelo con questo, che s'ingegna
Con questi vani peusieri
Fare il suo tristo tempo più soave,
Perchè altrove non ave
Dove voltare il viso,
Che gli è stato interciso
Mostrar con altre imprese alila virtue,
Non sendo premio alle fatiche sue.*

"Now there is no possible remedy for our ills. We must be satisfied to see every one stand apart, looking on, sneering and slandering. Thus the age strays from the old virtue ; for beholding how ready all are with their blame and their mockery, no one strives to accomplish generous deeds that are dispersed by the winds and enveloped in clouds. But should any one seek to cow the author by evil-speaking, I warn you that he, too, knows how to speak evil, and indeed excels in that art ; and that he has no respect for any one in Italy, although he bows and scrapes to those better dressed than himself." †

Callimaco is a Florentine aged thirty, who has quietly spent twenty years of his life in Paris. Hearing there great praises of the beauty and virtue of the wife of Nicias Calfucci, he comes to Florence on purpose to see her, and immediately falls desperately in love with her. This lady is named Lucrezia, and she is so good and pure that Callimaco's only hope lies in the foolishness of her husband, and the earnest wish of both the latter and his wife to have children born to them. A certain

* *Opere*, vol. v. p. 72. These words clearly show that they were written when he was already out of office.

† *Ibidem*, vol. v. p. 73.

Ligurio, a swindler, who frequents Calfucci's house and to whom Callimaco has promised money, is go-between in this intrigue. The simplicity and credulous witlessness of Messer Nicias, who bears the title of Doctor and has an excellent opinion of himself, are admirably depicted and furnish some of the wittiest scenes of the *Mandragola*. Meanwhile Ligurio tries to persuade Messer Nicias to do as physicians advise and take his wife to the Baths. In this way, he thinks, Callimaco will find it easier to know her and enjoy her society. But Messer Nicias resists, for much as he desires to become a father, he considers it a tremendous undertaking to stir from home, and this doctor says one thing and that another "and they don't know themselves what "they mean."

"It vexes you to go away," says Ligurio to him, "because you are not accustomed to lose sight of the cupola of the Duomo." "You're wrong there," quickly answers Messer Nicias; "I was a great wanderer in my youth and never failed to go to the fair at Prato, nor is there a walled place near Florence that I have not visited. And more than that, I've been to Pisa and Leghorn, that I can tell you!" "Oh Lord! Have you seen the sea? How much bigger is it than the Arno?" "The Arno, indeed! Why, it's four, six, seven times as big. One sees nothing but water, water, water!" At last it is settled that Ligurio is to ask the advice of the doctors while Nicias tries to persuade his wife to make the journey.

In the third and last scene of the first act, Callimaco

anxiously inquires of Ligurio what has been decided, and Ligurio replies that the Calfucci will probably go to the Baths, but fears that the lover will not gain anything by it. "I am afraid that you are right," answers Callimaco. "But what am I to do? what plan can I adopt? whither shall I turn? I must needs attempt somewhat, even if it be something great, or dangerous, or harmful, or infamous; it were better to die than live as I am now. If I were able to sleep by night, or to eat, or to converse, if I could take pleasure in anything, I should be more patient and bide my time. But there is no cure for this matter, and if nothing chances to give me a little hope, I cannot fail to die; so seeing that I must die, I shrink from nothing, but am ready to turn to any brutal, cruel, or atrocious means."

This language gives a very eloquent description of the violence of Callimaco's passion, before he has even spoken with the object of his love. Ligurio then declares that he is struck by a good idea, and proposes that Callimaco should be introduced to Nicias as a doctor. He will tell him more afterwards. And so it is arranged between them.

In the second act Ligurio presents Callimaco to Nicias as a physician, the inventor of a potion which would infallibly enable his wife to bear him a child. Only the first man who approached her after she had drunk it would speedily die. He must therefore allow his wife to see another man at first. The alarm of Nicias on hearing this, his attempts to speak Latin to the sham physician, his delight on hearing the latter reply in Latin

quotations that he does not understand, the ease with which he gives his consent directly he learns that the King of France and other monarchs have adopted the same expedient, and his continued belief in his own superior cunning, make this act exceedingly comic. But although Messer Nicias is won over, the wife has still to be persuaded ; and for this, Ligurio suggests that the only mode of attack must be through her confessor, who is a friar. "But who will conquer the confessor?" asks Callimaco. "You and I, gold, our badness and theirs," replies the other ; and he now suggests speaking to the lady's mother, so that she may induce the confessor to bring the authority of religion to bear upon her daughter and win the latter's consent.

In the third act the mother has been already gained, but on condition that her conscience is not to be burdened. Prudent people, she says, must choose the best of bad alternatives. Meanwhile Nicias has given Ligurio the twenty-five ducats demanded by him to bribe the friar, and they are on their way to the church to carry out that design. "These friars," remarks Ligurio, "are keen-witted and crafty, because they know their own sins as well as ours. He who is unaccustomed to them is deceived by their ways and does not know how to get round them."

And now Frà Timoteo comes on the stage for the first time, and from one point of view may really be said to be the most remarkable character in the piece. He is found in the church, quietly chatting with a maid servant, and the dialogue between them forms, by its incompar-

able vivacity, spontaneousness, and thoughtless serenity, so strange a contrast with all that is about to take place as to remind the reader of Shakespeare's matchless art.

"If you wish to confess," says the friar, "I am at your service." "Not to-day," replies the woman, "I am in a hurry, and it has done me good to vent myself a little, without going on my knees. Have you recited those masses to our Lady?" "Yes, mistress, I have." "Then here's a florin; and every Monday for two months you are to say a funeral mass for my husband's soul. And good for nothing as he was, yet the flesh is weak; I can't help feeling sorry, when I remember him. Do you think he really is in Purgatory?" "No doubt of it." "I can't be so sure of it. You know what he used to do to me sometimes. Oh! how I used to complain of it to you. I pushed him away as much as I could; but he teased me so much. Uh! good Lord!" "Do not fear, God's mercy is great. If man seeks to repent, he is always able to do so." "Do you think the Turks will come into Italy this year?" "That they will if you don't say your prayers." "Mercy! God save us from all these devilries; I've a mighty dread of those impalers. But I see a woman in church who has got some fennel of mine; I must go and speak to her. Good-day to you." "Good luck to you." *

Meanwhile Nicias and Ligurio come in, and the latter instantly tells the friar that they have several hundred florins to give in alms, provided he will help them in a certain business. This business, however, is entirely

* Act iii. scene iii.

fictitious, only brought forward to ascertain whether the friar would be ready to serve them for the sake of obtaining the money, and whether he could be depended upon for the real purpose required. In fact, seeing that he is willing to yield, Ligurio cunningly explains the whole thing to him, and obtains the desired promise. The women appear at this point, and the mother is assuring her daughter, that she would never try to persuade her to do anything that was wrong. "But "if Frà Timoteo tells you that there is no sin in "it, you may be quite at rest." The daughter, however, cannot persuade herself "that it can be right "that a man should die by disgracing her." And then the friar comes forward, and makes use of all his dexterity. "I have been consulting the books for more "than two hours upon this matter, and after much examination, I find many points in our favour, both in "general and in particular. As to your conscience, you "must cling to these generalities, that where there is the "alternative of a certain good or an uncertain evil, we "must never lose the good for fear of the evil. Here "there is the certain good, that you will have a son and "gain a soul for the Lord God. . . . It is the will and "not the body that commits sin, and sin would consist "in offending your husband, whereas you will do him a "kindness ; it would be sin to do this deed with pleasure, "but you dislike performing it. Besides this, in all "things we must look to the end. Your end is to fill a "seat in Paradise, and make your husband happy." *

* Act iii. scene xi.

And he continues in this strain, even reminding the woman how the Bible says that Lot's daughters committed no sin because their intentions were good, and concludes by saying that it is a question of a venial offence that can be cleansed with holy water. "To what do you urge me, father?" here exclaims poor Lucrezia; and all bewildered, she promises to do as she is bid; but adds that she fears she shall never survive her grief and shame.

The fourth act is opened by Callimaco, who is suffering agonies of suspense. He hopes one moment, despairs the next. "You are mad," he says to himself; "you know that disillusion and repentance must follow, even if you gain your intent! But what is the worst that can befall you? To die and go to hell. Yet since so many worthy men have died and gone to hell, why should you be ashamed to go there yourself? Look your fate in the face! Fly from evil; or, if you cannot fly from it, bear it like a man! Don't succumb, don't abase yourself like a woman. But I cannot fix my mind upon this idea," "because I am so consumed by love for that woman, that I feel all shaken from my head to the soles of my feet; my legs tremble, my entrails stir, my heart leaps from my bosom, my arms give way, my tongue is mute, my eyes are dazzled, my brain whirls." *

Ligurio again appears, and the plot that has been hatched draws rapidly to its close. Frà Timoteo has donned a disguise and become an active and powerful

* Act iv. scene i.

ally in the infamous cause, although behaving throughout with the easiest good humour. "For they speak truth "who say that bad company brings men to the gallows. "And just as often one goes wrong through being too "yielding and too good, as through being too wicked. "The Lord knows I never meant to do harm to any one. "I stayed in my cell, I said my prayers, I conversed "with my penitents, and then came to me this devil of a "Ligurio, who made me stain my finger in a crime, in "which I have now plunged my arm and the whole of "my person, and don't yet know how much farther "I shall have to go. Yet I take comfort in this, that "when a thing concerns many, many must concern them- "selves with it." * After this all goes according to the wishes of Callimaco.

The fifth and last act opens with another soliloquy of Frà Timoteo, whose anxiety to know what has happened has cost him a sleepless night. "I said matins, "I read one of the lives of the Holy Fathers, I went "into the church and relit a lamp that had gone out, "I changed the veil of a miracle-working Madonna. "How many times have I told those monks to keep her "clean! And then they are astonished if people don't "pray to her! I remember the time when she had five "hundred pictures, and now she hasn't twenty. And "it is all our fault for not having known how to keep "up her reputation. We used to recite prayers and "make processions, so that there should always be "plenty of fresh pictures. Now we no longer do any-

* Act iv. scene vi.

"thing of that kind, and then we are surprised that "devotion cools. Oh! what poor brains these monks "of mine have! But I hear a great noise proceeding "from Messer Nicias's house!" All the dramatis personæ come in, happy and laughing, to bring Lucrezia to be purified, and the friar, remembering the promised alms offering, recites prayers and bestows his blessing on the company. "Who would not be joyful?" is the last speech of the mother in this comedy, ending with the blessing pronounced from the altar upon adultery.

That which strikes us as most extraordinary, however, is neither the spectacle of a thoroughly corrupt society, nor the absence of any truly honest and virtuous character; but rather the appalling absence of conscience in all the characters, their horrible freedom from moral responsibility, and the manner in which they pass from good to evil without seeming to be aware of any change. Callimaco has fallen in love with Lucrezia before having seen her, and merely through hearing praises of her beauty and virtue; his passion quickly becomes uncontrollable, nor has it any other than a sensual aim. It makes life unbearable to him, and he is ready to recur to "any means, however brutal, cruel or atrocious." Scruples and fear of hell disturb him at one moment; but then, reflecting how many worthy men have gone to perdition, he thinks that he too, should have the courage to face eternal punishment. The only virtuous character in the piece is the young wife, poor Lucrezia, a negative being, without any will of her own and entirely at the mercy of the falsehood

and caprice of the rest. When her mother, her husband, and all the others urge her to adultery in order that she may bear a child, she shudders and resists; but then being taken to church and into the presence of her confessor, she is easily persuaded by him that there can be no sin "in filling a seat in Paradise." So she not only ends by resigning herself, but determines to enjoy her life gaily in the abyss of immorality into which she has been plunged. The clearest expression and most perfect personification of this state of things is found in Frà Timoteo. He says his prayers and recites mass, attends devoutly to the holy images and to confession; but when some charity money is offered him in consideration of his doing a deed of infamy, he is not in the least revolted. He reflects that there will be more masses to say, more candles to light; he studies the sacred writings, and, on finding a sophism adapted to the case, consents to promote an act of adultery; to persuade the unlucky Lucrezia that evil is good, and that by her own dishonour she will commit an action pleasing to the Almighty. It is true that he makes the passing reflection that bad company leads the best of men into evil; but the plunge is already taken and he is consoled by remembering that it is every one's interest to keep the crime concealed. He dusts the images, reads the lives of the saints, deplores the scanty piety of the times, and all the while is overcome by an intense desire to know if the sin prepared and made possible by his assistance has succeeded *ad votum*. He then pronounces a blessing upon all concerned from the altar.

In the presence of this comedy, do we not see arise before us, as though evoked from our conscience, the tragic figure of the *Prince*, rushing through the streets, brandishing a blood-stained sword and by means of force and fraud and violence compelling his subjects to join together to build up a State, and create a fatherland? And thereafter, training them in the *Art of War*, he leads them against the enemy, inciting them not by Christian but by Pagan maxims, and the example of ancient Rome, to pour out their blood in defence of this State, this fatherland, and at last, through danger and misfortune to learn to be men? Can we not hear the thunder of Martin Luther's mighty voice proclaiming the existence of conscience, its sacredness and inviolability, and thus driving even the Catholics to repentance and self-correction?

It has been well said that the *Mandragola* is the comedy of a society of which the *Prince* is the tragedy. The latter seeks to cure at the sword's point the evils that the former paints with a jest, but of which it equally indicates the hidden cause. Accordingly it begins and ends within the walls of a church. Already the *Discourses* had bidden us seek in the Church for the germ of Italian corruption, and we are now shown a graphic representation of the manner in which religion, having sunk into a purely mechanical conventionality, can find sophisms to justify evil as easily as good, and thus make conscience a blank. It would seem from this play that men may commit evil unawares and without any wickedness. The acts accomplished by them are no

longer acts of their own. They would seem to be dictated and led by some outer force, now a passion, now an instinct, now a habit, now a prejudice, but never by anything worthy of the name of conscience. Therefore no remedy can be had but from some other exterior force. Steel is the only cure. Such was always Machiavelli's ruling idea, and whenever he expounds it, his spirit is fired, his diction gains precision, elegance and captivating strength, he is as one inspired and lifted above himself. This idea was the main theme of the *Prince*, and a distant flash of it is visible in the *Mandragola*. Accordingly, in both these works the style and language of the author attain so high a standard as to convert them into the two finest literary masterpieces of Italian prose. Machiavelli undoubtedly stands first among our writers of prose. His every word expresses an idea, without useless ornament, without artifice, without effort of any sort. Men, events, dumb things even, seem to have language of their own and directly addressed to the reader. His writings teem with the admirable wit that springs from the lips of the people of Florence, and he occasionally reproduces with singular vigour even their somewhat ungrammatical idioms. He only employs his Latin scholarship so far as is strictly necessary to give force and dignity to his style. Even in his other works his classical learning is seldom allowed to be too preponderant, and certainly in his *Mandragola* the treasures of the spoken tongue are freely lavished in all their freshness, fragrance, and inexhaustible variety of colour and sound. Without ever stooping to vulgarity,

he is always natural and spontaneous, and always elegant, without ever resorting to artifice.

Macaulay, whose literary judgments have an undoubted weight, had an almost limitless admiration for the *Mandragola*. He considers it a proof that had Machiavelli devoted himself to the drama, he would have attained to the highest eminence, and would have produced a salutary effect upon the national literature and taste. "This," he says, "we infer, not so much from the degree, as from the kind of his excellence." . . . "By the correct and vigorous delineation of human nature it produces interest without a pleasing or skilful plot, and laughter without the least ambition of wit." * He considers Nicias to be the most original character in the whole comedy, and declares it to be beyond all praise.† And certainly this presumptuous simpleton, so entirely unaware of his own foolishness, who is every one's laughing-stock, is the truest and most ingenuous personage of a world wherein every one, including those most bound to have some conscience, are utterly devoid of any. The laughter aroused by Nicias, the comic situations he is always bringing about, are not spoilt for us by any extraneous consideration. In his style, therefore,

* Macaulay's *Essays*, vol. i. p. 86.

† "But old Nicias is the glory of the piece. We cannot call to mind anything that resembles him. The follies which Molière ridicules are those of affectation, not those of fatuity. Coxcombs and pedants, not absolute simpletons are his game. Shakespeare has indeed a vast assortment of fools; but the precise species of which we speak is not, if we remember right, to be found there. . . . Cloten is an arrogant fool, Ostric a foppish fool, Ajax a savage fool; but Nicias is, as Thersites says "of Patroclus, a positive fool." Macaulay's *Essays*, vol. i. p. 87.

he is perfect ; his acquaintance is an artistic pleasure, unmarred by moral pain.

Nevertheless the *Mandragola* has a serious side, that entirely escaped Macaulay's notice, just as he failed to discover its weakest point. On examining the fundamental unity of the play, its leading conception, we see that Frà Timoteo is the character upon which our principal attention is fixed. In him we have pure comedy united to deep and murderous satire on Italian society, and this helps to enlarge our appreciation of the lofty genius of the creator of this very singular character. Nevertheless we cannot often laugh heartily at Frà Timoteo. Dominated by graver thoughts, our imagination cannot have free vent, cannot give itself up to purely æsthetic contemplation. The author endeavours to show us the comic side alone of the society before his eyes ; but in his mind comedy necessarily led to satire, and whenever this change takes place we have to guess at his highest and deepest ideas because they are left in an abstract and uncertain shape. He has no longer the power to dress them in poetic or comic garb, and yet seeks to laugh at that which cannot move to laughter. Hence the atmosphere of true comedy rapidly disappears, and the characters lose their real and concrete physiognomy.

Some critics have declared Frà Timoteo to be a good monk, and that the author only intended to make him an example of the consequences of a false religion. But it remains to be proved that men can be good while assisting in the accomplishment of abominable actions, and

even crowning them with the benediction of the Church. It is true that religion having once become corrupt and perverted into empty formalism, may be the source of great evil. But it is not true that men can pass from good to evil with the calm and serenity of mind displayed by Frà Timoteo in the *Mandragola*. And what can be said of a mother who laughingly asks her confessor's help to compass the dishonour of her own daughter ; or of the daughter who is virtuous, and yet ends by jesting over the wreck of her own virtue? Now and then, indeed, the author sighs, as it were, against his will, and deplores the times in which he has been born and to which he belongs ; but these laments only prove that there is one side of human nature that he has forgotten to take into account. For the description he gives us of it in the *Mandragola*, vigorous and original as it is, has not always the exactitude claimed for it by Macaulay. The investigation of social corruption by studying it apart from all else, inquiry into its causes and concerning its cure, may often be useful as a prelude to, or in the creation of a science. But art, on the contrary, demands living realities, and is crushed by the practice of vivisection. For art requires that in whatever depth of crime or corruption the cry of conscience should still be audible, even if only from afar, since conscience can never be utterly extinguished, until human nature itself has ceased to exist. The transition from good to evil, even in the lightest and most deceptive form, can never be effected without moral suffering, and can never move us to careless mirth.

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In a burst of genuine inspiration, Machiavelli was able to overcome the many difficulties in his way, and to rise superior to himself. His frequently happy power of dramatic representation, his freshness of style and depth of thought enabled him to compose a marvellous, if not faultless work. But when he again tried to explore this new vein, he could find no ore of the same quality. His attempts, more than once vainly repeated, proved that he was not born to be a true dramatic poet, although he had produced one excellent comedy. His ruling idea, in the shape in which it always appeared to him, was only fertile in political and historical science, and in that field alone unceasingly fruitful of novel food for thought. Throughout the sixteenth century the Italian stage persistently followed the road it had begun to take even before Machiavelli's attempts, and had to pay the penalty of its sins. Possessed of inexhaustible fancy and comic force, with a really prodigious wealth, spontaneity and elegance of language and style, with an unrivalled liveliness of dialogue, Italy produced an infinite number of comedies, without achieving the creation of a really national comic stage,* such as, without preaching morality, is yet fitted for the improvement of mankind.

The *Clizia*, which was performed in Florence in 1525,† was undoubtedly written after the *Mandragola*, since in

* Besides the authors mentioned above, Herr Theodor Mundt also makes some just remarks upon *La Mandragola* at paragraph xiv. ("Die Mandragola oder Komödie und Kirche") of his work upon Machiavelli quoted by us elsewhere.

† As we shall presently see, Vasari speaks of this performance in his *Vite dei Pittori*, and Nerli mentions it in one of his letters.

the third scene of the second act there is an allusion to the latter play. The action of the piece is dated 1506,* that is two years after that of the *Mandragola*. It is of very inferior merit, being no more than a simple imitation of the *Casina* of Plautus, which, as is well known, was itself a copy from the Greek. Sometimes Machiavelli follows his original so closely as to give a literal translation; at others, where his imitation is less servile, he writes with far greater vivacity. But throughout the piece not only is his comic power very inferior to that of the great Latin playwright he wishes to emulate, but he has weakened its best portions by a superfluity of sententious reflections and remarks.

The prologue begins by reiterating in grave and pompous prose the idea so frequently enunciated in the author's political works; namely, that as mankind is always the same, so that which once occurred in Athens has now happened even in Florence. He has fixed his choice on the Florentine incident, because nowadays Greek is no longer spoken; and thus he easily converts the ancient into a modern play.

Cleandro and his aged father, Nicomaco, are both in love with the maiden Clizia, who has been reared like a daughter of the house. Nicomaco wishes to make her the wife of his serving man, Pirro, and Cleandro, with an equally bad motive, tries to defeat his father's scheme, proposing to give her in marriage to his bailiff, Eustachio, and is assisted in this by his mother, who is aware of all

* In the first scene of act i. Cleandro says: "When twelve years ago, in 1494," etc. *Opere*, vol. v. p. 139.

that is going on. This situation, chiefly represented in a narrative form, occupies the first act, which Plautus, on the contrary, had composed in the shape of a very brilliant and laughable dialogue between the servant and the bailiff. And Machiavelli, not satisfied with narrating instead of representing his incidents, also assigns a lengthy monologue to Cleandro, who after comparing the life of a lover to that of a soldier, indulges in a series of general reflections that would be better suited to a political or historical dissertation. The second act is much more lively. The wife quarrels with her husband because she wants to marry the girl to the bailiff, "who knows how to attend to his business, has a capital and would live upon plain water, whereas the servant Pirro passes his life in taverns and at gambling tables, and would die of hunger in Altopascio." Then, remaining alone on the stage, she gives a most vivid description of the change that has come over her husband, and thus affords us a graphic picture of the life of Florentine burghers at that period. "He went to mass, looked after his affairs, held intercourse with the magistrates, was regular in all things. But ever since he has had a fancy for this girl, his business is neglected, his farms go badly, his trade is ruined. He is always angry without knowing why; he fidgets in and out of the house a thousand times a day, and does not know what he is doing." The diction of this act is very animated and full of Florentine phrases. It concludes with a dialogue between the servant and the bailiff, excellently imitated from that composing the first act of Plautus's comedy.

In the third act of *Clizia*, Cleandro laments that his own father should be his rival in love. There is no real fun in this situation, nor has it any element of tragedy. As in the *Casina*, here, too, the wife at last agrees with her husband to leave everything to chance, which decides in favour of Pirro according to Nicomaco's wish. The latter now feels certain of success, but has counted his chickens before they are hatched. He joyfully settles with his docile and cringing servant how the marriage is to be arranged, and in which house he is first to meet the bride alone. His wife, however, keeps strict watch over him, will not leave him an instant, and contrives matters in such a way that poor Nicomaco finds himself alone, not with Clizia, but with a servant lad in disguise. The manner in which the old husband is drawn into the trap and made a general laughing stock, is really comic, and shows perhaps even more originality than is found in Plautus.* Throughout the greater part of this act Machiavelli closely follows, or indeed translates from, the *Casina*.† But the latter shows far greater truth to nature; for here the maiden is betrothed to a slave, not, as in *Clizia*, to a free man, and her blind and

* Macaulay holds the same opinion: "The relation of the trick put upon the doting old lover is exquisitely humorous. It is far superior to the corresponding passage in the Latin comedy, and scarcely yields to the accounts which Falstaff gives of his ducking." Macaulay's *Essays*, vol. i. p. 88.

† In fact, the fourth scene of this fourth act is an almost literal translation from the second scene of act iii. of the *Casina*, and so, too, the sixth from the fourth, and the seventh from the fifth. Even the soliloquy in scene viii. of act iv. of the *Clizia* is imitated from the first scene of act iv. of the *Casina*.

absolute submission is therefore more probable and tolerable in the ancient than in the modern play. In the fifth act the wife, thanks to the plot she has contrived, obtains her end, and the humiliated husband at last makes his peace with her. A gentleman just arrived from Naples is discovered to be Clizia's father, and her marriage with Cleandro is celebrated. This last incident is only announced in the comedy of Plautus, who indeed brings neither the maiden nor Cleandro upon the stage. Machiavelli follows his example as regards the girl. Plautus, however, understood that there was nothing really comic in the spectacle of love-rivalry between a father and son; Machiavelli refused to follow him in this particular, and his work has suffered in consequence.

The *Prose comedy*, a very short work in three acts, rather resembles the so-called proverbs of the present day. The subject seems to have been taken from an incident that made much sensation in the more dissipated stratum of Florentine society. A servant girl receives the confidences of her old master, Amerigo, who has fallen in love with his gossip, the wife of Alfonso, and of Friar Alberigo, who is enamoured of her young mistress, Caterina. The latter, after hearing of her husband's avowal, tells the maid that she has lost patience and means to find a lover for herself, whereupon the maid speaks to her of the enamoured friar, and easily overcomes her objections to him. No sooner is the friar sure of his footing than he sets to work to upset the intrigue between Amerigo and his gossip, with whose husband he is acquainted. Amerigo's wife comes to Alfonso's house,

and after meeting the friar there, waits to see her own husband, who enters expecting to be received by his gossip. There is a noisy scene in which Amerigo is mocked and flouted. In the midst of it the friar appears, as if by chance, and immediately tries to reconcile the husband and wife, who, after another burst of indecent abuse, come to terms with each other, and by choosing the friar for their confessor, leave him master of the situation.

In this work Machiavelli's language is even grosser than usual, narrative supplies the place of action, and there is no true development of character. Nevertheless, there is plenty of the usual brilliancy of dialogue.*

We must now say a few words of two other plays, the *Comedy in verse*, and the *Andria*, which is a translation from Terence. The authenticity of the former work has been disputed by many writers, although it is regarded by some as a production of Machiavelli's youth. There is one very remarkable circumstance that might indeed incline us to believe it his; namely, that the famous Strozzi Codex in the Florence National Library comprises an autograph copy of this play. But this external

* Polidori places this comedy among the works unjustly attributed to Machiavelli, although he allows that there is no internal evidence "to prevent its being attributed to the Florentine playwright." But he regards it as an imitation of the *Mandragola*, and for this sole reason will not believe it to have been written by Machiavelli. (*Prefazione* already quoted, p. xv.) There is certainly some resemblance between the two plays, but no trace of imitation or *derivation* by another hand, as Polidori asserts but does not prove. It may be said that the author repeats himself, but that would merely show the scanty fertility of his comic vein. In fact, after the *Mandragola*, as we have already said, he produced nothing more of any true originality in his capacity of comic poet.

proof loses value when we remember that the same collection of manuscripts contains the *Descrizione della peste*, also in Machiavelli's handwriting, which no one at the present day attributes to his authorship. Then, too, at the end of the comedy is the inscription, also in his hand: "*Ego Barlachia recensui*,"* supporting the theory of his having copied the writings of these authors in this codex, a theory we shall find additionally confirmed further on. And if we turn from external to internal evidence, it would be very difficult to assign this *Comedy in verse* to Machiavelli. Hinging entirely on a confusion of the two names of Camillo and Catillo, it represents an incident of ancient Roman life. It has no plot, no charm of style, its characters are lacking in life and spontaneity, and it is excessively tedious reading. Crammed with perpetual monologues, it has none of those witty Florentine quips and turns of speech,

* Polidori mentions that this Barlachia or Barlacchi was a public crier in Florence, and supposes that Machiavelli assumed his name almost as an announcement that in his comedies he acted as a public crier of the vices of his fellow citizens. *Vide* the above quoted preface to *Le Opere Minori* del Machiavelli, p. xiii.; the note at the end of the play, p. 586, and the description of the Strozzi Codex, at p. 415, of the same volume. Professor Hillebrand, on the contrary, holds that the word *recensui* is here used in the meaning of *rividi*, and therefore proves nothing. Barlachia, he thinks, here only stands for simpleton, such in fact being the colloquial meaning of the term *barlacchio* or *barbalucchio*, and was adopted as a *nom de plume* by Machiavelli in a passing caprice. (Hillebrand, *Études*, etc., p. 352, note i.) This, however, is a simple hypothesis. It seems to us that the comedy is absolutely unworthy of Machiavelli, as indeed Professor Hillebrand also agrees. We may note in conclusion that Vasari, when describing the festivities and performances got up by the *Compagnia della Cassuola* in Florence, mentions Barlacchi as one of the pleasant men of that time, and says that he took an active part in those festivities. *Vite*, etc., vol. xii. p. 16.

that are never wanting to the plays and poems of Machiavelli. Even looking through it at random, it would be hard to credit him with verses like those of the monologue beginning thus :

"Oh ! che disgrazia, oh ! che infelicità
 "È quella di chi vive in gelosia !
 "Oh ! quanti savi tener pazzi fa,
 "Ma de' pazzi giammai savi non fè.
 "Non si mangia un boccon mai che buon sia ;
 "Usasi sempre solo. Adunque egli è
 "Piacer da mille forche. E spesse volte
 "Stassi desto la notte a udir quel dice
 "Sua donna, perchè già n'è sute colte ;
 "Che c'è chi in sogno i fatti suoi ridice." *

It runs on in this way for sixty verses. Another monologue begins thus :

"Oh ! che miseria è quella degli amanti,
 "Ma molto più di quelli
 "Ch' hanno i lor modi strani a sofferire !
 "Io, per me, innanzi vuo' prima morire,
 "Che seguir tai cervelli." †

And it follows in the same style throughout fifty-six more verses. The entire comedy is full of stuff of this, and even of a worse quality. Even Polidori, who has published it among the works of Machiavelli, is very doubtful of its authenticity. Hillebrand, although accepting it as authentic, and discovering occasional beauties here and there in it, also allows it to be unworthy of the author of *La Mandragola*. Macaulay, however, denies that it can be genuine, asserting that neither its merits nor its defects bear any resemblance

* Act i. scene v.

† Act ii. scene v.

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to those of Machiavelli.* And in this opinion we fully concur.

Andria is only a translation of Terence's comedy of the same name. Comparison with the original shows certain points where the Latin phraseology has not been faithfully rendered, and others in which the Italian version is still obscure and clumsy, thereby leading us to the conclusion that it was never revised. In general, however, it is not only faithful to the original, but has a far greater amount of freshness and spontaneity than can be found in more modern translations.†

* "The latter we can scarcely believe to be genuine. Neither its merits "nor its defects remind us of the reputed author." Macaulay's *Essays*, vol. i. p. 88.

† Here are a few examples. In scene v. of act i., Pamphilus, in speaking of Cremetas, who after at first refusing, is now willing to grant him his daughter, becomes suspicious and says: *Aliquid monstri alunt*. Machiavelli translates this literally: "*They nourish some monster*," which only makes nonsense. Cesari gives the far better rendering: "*There must be some devilry in this*." Further on, in speaking of Miside, who *laborat e dolore*, where it is meant that she is suffering the pains of labour, Machiavelli simply translates: *she is dying of pain*. In scene iii. of act ii., the servant Darus advises Pamphilus to pretend to his friends that he still desires the maiden, although he has ceased to care for her, because only by this device can he lull their suspicions and be enabled to continue his evil practices, and preserve his liberty. If, on the other hand, he were to declare that he no longer wanted the girl, his friends would try to turn him from his bad ways by seeking him another bride, and would certainly find one, notwithstanding his poverty, as they would look for one without any dower. It is certain, says Darus, that Cremetas will not give thee his daughter, and thus thou canst continue thy practices: *nec tu ea causa minueris—Hæc que facis*. Machiavelli's rendering is: *Neither for this cause must thou abstain from doing that which thou dost*, which is not nearly so clear as Cesari's version: *it will not be necessary for you to change your way of life*. Then the servant adds, that as to saying that no other bride will be found, because no one would bestow a wife on one in thy condition, that could be easily contradicted, because thy father would rather give thee a pauper bride than

These are the plays of the Florentine Secretary. But we should not forget to mention how it has frequently been asserted that *La Sporta*, the better of the two comedies by Giovan Battista Gelli, was written from rough sketches on the same theme left by Machiavelli.* And this assertion, although contradicted by others, has been abundantly confirmed by Ricci, who, in the enumeration he gives of his grandfather's works in his *Priorista*, plainly declares that Machiavelli also composed another play, "entitled *La Sporta*, founded on the "idea of the *Aulularia* of Plautus, and that some "fragments of it, once possessed by Bernardino di "Giordano, having fallen into the hands of Giovan "Battista Gelli, the latter, after making some trifling "additions, gave it to the world as his own work."† Gelli, on the other hand, in his dedicatory epistle says that he took his subject from real life; acknowledges in the prologue that he has designedly imitated Plautus and Terence, and in scene iv. of act iii. refers to *La*

allow thee to continue in a course so opposed to morality. *Nam quod tu speras propulsabo facile: uxorem his moribus—Dabit nemo. Inopem inveniet potius quam te corrumpi sinat.* Machiavelli translates: *It is easy to confute that which thou fearest, for no one would give a wife to such conduct: he would rather bestow her on a pauper.* Here there is both inexactitude and obscurity. It is not easy to understand the meaning of *dar moglie a cotesti costumi*. The other words are no rendering of the original. Cesari gives this translation: "*As regards the hope you express by saying: no one would give a wife to one like myself, I can cast it down with a breath. Your father would find you one without a dowry, rather than let you go to the bad in this way.*" This rendering is affected, but is far clearer and more exact than that of Machiavelli.

* Moreni, *Annali della tipografia del Torrentino*, p. 19 (Florence, Francesco Daddi, 1819), and so also two other writers.

† *Quartiere S. Spirito*, at sheets 160r.

Mandragola and *La Clizia*, without adding any comment. However, it is an acknowledged fact that he not only studied Machiavelli a great deal, but also copied him. The theme of *Circe*, which is Gelli's best work, is to be found in the *Asino d'oro* of Machiavelli, who had borrowed it from the ancients; and his second comedy, entitled *L'Errore*, was, at least in part, as he implicitly allows, imitated from *La Clizia*.* *La Sporta*, however, is far better, and on reading it attentively we can sometimes trace the hand of the Florentine Secretary in the greater truthfulness and vivacity of the dialogue, and in certain monologues containing some of his well-known touches of reflection. We believe that it was Gelli who greatly complicated the plot of the piece, by the introduction of episodes and secondary personages, which Machiavelli always took care to avoid. Probably the latter had only sketched the general framework, and begun to colour the scenes and dialogues here and there in his incomparably vivacious manner. This, however, is mere hypothesis, and his rough sketch being lost, it can never be ascertained what was his exact share in the composition of *La Sporta*. In any case this could neither greatly add to, nor detract from his fame as a comic author, for that must always mainly depend upon *La Mandragola*, the only play proving him to have possessed any real dramatic genius. For this work was the birth of a fit of happy inspiration, of true poetic creativeness, never again to be repeated in his life.

* "The plot of the play turns on a similar incident to that of Machiavelli's *Clizia*." Prologue to *L'Errore*.

CHAPTER X.

The Golden Ass—The Capitoli and other minor poems—Dialogue on Language—Description of the Plague—Dialogue on Anger and the methods of its cure—The tale of the Archfiend Belphagor—Other minor writings.

IT was mainly during these years that Machiavelli employed his leisure hours in writing several minor works in verse and prose, of which it is now time to speak. As to the few poems he produced, his verses are easy, often satirical and pungently vivacious, but they have too much resemblance to prose. Energetic expressions, profound and well-directed thoughts may frequently be found in them; but they are always philosophic maxims and considerations reminding us of the *Prince* and the *Discourses*, and lack force of imagery, originality of exposition, and every quality, in short, that is essential to genuine poetry. Nevertheless, these verses often teach us to understand their author's mental condition, and thereby assist us to a clearer conception of the history of his intellect.

The *Golden Ass* is the commencement of a poem in *terza rima*, upon which the author was engaged in 1517, as is shown by a letter addressed by him to Ludovico

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Alamanni * in the same year, proving that he considered this to be a work of much importance. Yet, after writing eight very short chapters, he laid it aside, having lost all impulse and desire to continue a narrative devoid of plot, without passion and without charm. The title is borrowed from Apuleius and Lucian, the theme from Plutarch's dialogue, *The Grasshopper*, from which Gelli also derived his *Circe*. Here and there, too, we perceive a certain tendency to imitate the *Divina Commedia*, but the substance of it is, or is intended to be, a satire on the Florentines of Machiavelli's own day. The poet tells us that after having long renounced stabbing this man and that in his writings, he has had a sudden return of his old passion, specially moved thereunto because the times afforded so large a field for satire. Entering a wild forest, he is met, not by Dante's three wild beasts, but by one of Circe's damsels, surrounded by her herd, consisting of men transformed into animals. He is conducted by her to a palace, and warned that he also will be changed into a beast. Meanwhile he sups with his companion, and gives the following minute, if neither artistic nor elegant description of her charms :

“ Avea la testa una grazia attrattiva
“ Tal ch 'io non so a chi me la somigli,
“ Perchè l'occhio al guardarla si smarriva.
“ Sottili, arcati e neri erano i cigli ;
“ Perchè a plasmargli fur tutti gli Dei,
“ Tutti e' celesti e superni consigli.” †

* *Opere*, vol. vii. letter xlvi. p. 152.

† *Ibidem*, vol. v. *Asino d'oro*, chap. iv. p. 397.

Then, being left alone, he immediately, like a philosopher, begins to ponder the reasons :

"Del variar delle mondane cose,"

And proceeds to enounce his well-known considerations. That which causes the great to fall from the summit of their power is their unceasing greed for dominion. Venice began to decline from the moment that she tried to extend her territory on the mainland. Sparta and Athens began to lose strength when they had vanquished their neighbours. The commonwealths of Germany, on the contrary, with no more than six miles of territory, are free and at peace. Florence, with her boundaries close to her walls, could defy the Emperor Henry IV., but at the present day quails before every one. It is certain that a government is far more durable when it has good laws and pure manners ; but even then we cannot be assured of lasting tranquillity, because change is inevitable in human events.

"La virtù fa le region tranquille ;
"E da tranquillità poi ne risolta
"L'ozio, e l'ozio arde i paesi e le ville.
"Poi, quando una provincia è stata involta
"Ne' disordini un tempo, tornar suole
"Virtute ad abitarvi un' altra volta.
"Quest'ordine così permette e vuole
"Chi ci governa, acciò che nulla stia
"O possa star mai fermo sotto 'l sole."

So it has been and will always be. Good follows evil and *vice versa* ; the one is the cause of the other. Those are much deceived who think to escape such vicissitudes by means of prayer and fasting.

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"Credet che senza te, per te contrasti
"Dio, standoti ozioso e ginocchioni,
"Ha molti regni e molti Stati guasti."

Prayer is quite necessary to the people, and he who forbade it would be mad :

"Ma non sia alcun di sì poco cervello,
"Che creda, se la sua casa ruina,
"Che Dio la salvi senz'altro puntello ;
"Perchè e' morrà sotto quella ruina."*

This, as all may perceive, is not poetry, but rather paragraphs of the *Discourses* put into verse. There is less philosophy in the three concluding chapters. The beautiful maiden takes the poet to see the animals, and he first gives us a catalogue of them, and then pauses to converse with a fat hog, asking him if he wishes to be again a man. He receives in reply the well-known eulogy on the condition of beasts who are free from all cares and worries, and the hog does his best to prove that in every respect the lot of animals is preferable to that of mankind.†

According to Busini, the allusions in the *Golden Ass* are aimed at Luigi Guicciardini and the adherents of the Medici, but he can tell us nothing in support of this theory.‡ It is true that Machiavelli himself declares that he found among the animals brought before him old

* *Asino d'oro*, chap. v.

† Both La Fontaine in his fable, *Les Compagnons d'Ulysse* (xii. 1), and Fénelon in his dialogue, *Ulysse et Gryllus*, have also borrowed from Plutarch, incited perhaps by the example of Machiavelli and Gelli. In La Fontaine, a wolf, a lion, and a bear take the place of the hog. In Fénelon, as in Machiavelli and Plutarch, it is the hog that refuses to become a man.

‡ Busini, *Lettere*, p. 243.

acquaintances whom he had once regarded as so many Fabiuses and Catoes, but had afterwards recognized by their deeds to be mere sheep and lambs, and that on this account he wished to attack them. But the poem was broken off before the transformation of the hero into a donkey, just at the point where the allusions would have become more transparent; accordingly, if Busini and his contemporaries failed to interpret their meaning, it is hopelessly impossible for us to do so at the present date.

Other minor poems now follow in the *Opere*; first the short *Capitolo dell' Occasione*,* addressed to Filippo dei Nerli, formerly thought to be imitated from a Greek epigram in the *Anthologia Planudea*, but which is instead almost a literal rendering of the version of it by Ausonias in epigram xii.† Of greater length is the *Capitolo di Fortuna*, addressed to Giovan Battista Soderini. With much clearness, spontaneity, and some felicitous imagery, Machiavelli once more preaches his ideas upon Fortune. The only happy man is he who can adapt himself to the wheels upon which Fortune turns; but as their movement is perpetually changing, even that is not enough. Hence we ought to be ready

* *Opere*, vol. v. p. 419.

† The Greek epigram is in the *Anthologia Planudea*, iv. 275. The imitation by Ausonias, *In simulacrum Occasionis et Poenitentia*, contains certain details wanting to the original, but employed by Machiavelli; and this proves beyond doubt that the latter borrowed from Ausonias. *La Penitenza*, to which Machiavelli alludes, is not mentioned in the Greek, but only in the Latin epigram, that besides is almost literally translated in the Italian. Poliziano had already collated the Greek epigram with that of Ausonias, and remarked on their points of agreement and difference in his *Miscellanea*, chap. xlix. p. 265, Basle edition of 1553. *Idem*, too, Jacobs, *Anthol. Gr.*, vol. viii. p. 145 and fol.

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to leap from wheel to wheel, but the hidden virtue that rules us will not allow us to do so: we cannot change our person, neither can we our nature. Often, accordingly, the higher we have mounted, the lower do we fall, and it is then that Fortune shows the extent of her power :

“ Avresti tu mai visto in loco alcuno
“ Come un’ aquila in alto si trasporta,
“ Cacciata dalla fame e dal digiuno ?
“ E come una testuggine alto porta,
“ Acciocchè il colpo nel cader la ’nfranga,
“ E pasca sè di quella carne morta ? ” *

This *Capitolo*, undoubtedly one of the best, is followed by another, *Della Ingratitudine*, addressed to Giovanni Folchi.† The latter is far more hastily written, but has several noteworthy allusions to the author’s misfortunes. Torn by the fangs of others’ envy, so Machiavelli begins, my unhappiness would be greatly increased were not the Muses responsive to the strings of my lyre. I know that I am no true poet, yet still I hope to glean a few laurel branches in the path that is bestrewn with them :

“ Cantando dunque, cerco dal cuor torre,
“ E frenar quel dolor de’ casi adversi,
“ Cui dietro il pensier mio furioso corre ;
“ E come del servir gli anni sien persi
“ Come in fra rena si semini ed acque,
“ Sarà or la materia de’ miei versi.”

When the stars were vexed by the glory of mankind, the daughter of Avarice and Suspicion, Ingratitude, was born, and she has her chief abode in courts and in the hearts of princes. She deals her wounds with three

* *Opere*, vol. v. p. 425.

† *Ibidem*, vol. v. p. 427.

poisoned darts: by leaving benefits unrecompensed, by forgetting them altogether, and lastly by positively insulting her benefactors.

“Questo colpo trapassa dentro all’ ossa,
“Questa terza ferita è più mortale,
“Questa saetta vien con maggior possa.”

He then adds that under popular government, Ingratitude is all the greater in proportion with its ignorance; consequently worthy citizens are always badly remunerated by it, and sometimes driven to meditate the establishment of tyranny. He refers to Greek and Roman history, Aristides, Scipio and Cæsar, before touching upon his own times, in which he finds princes to be even more ungrateful than the masses, and instances the great Captain Consalvo who has earned his sovereign’s distrust in reward for his defeat of the French—in *premio delle galliche sconfitte*.

This allusion proves the *Capitolo* to have been written no later than 1515. And Machiavelli then concludes, almost in self-admonishment:

“Dunque non sendo Ingratitudin morta,
“Ciascun fuggir le Corti e Stati debbe;
“Che non c’è via che guidi l’uom più corta
“A pianger quel ch’e’ volle, poi che l’ebbe.” *

In the *Capitolo dell’ Ambizione*, addressed to Luigi Guicciardini,† he again falls back upon politico-philosophic considerations. It must have been composed soon after its predecessor, for it frequently alludes, as to matters of recent date, to the fraternal struggle of the

* *Opere*, vol. v. pp. 427-432.

† *Ibidem*, vol. v. p. 433.

Petrucchi in Siena, which broke out in the year 1516. Ambition began with Cain, and mankind has never since been delivered from it. Consequently there is no peace in the world ; kingdoms and states have been undone ; princes overthrown, and if you would know why ambition succeeds in one case and fails in another, I will tell you that this depends upon whether ferocity of mind is or is not coupled with it. And if any one would blame nature because she no longer gives us men provided with this energy, I would remind him that education can always correct nature's defects. Education once made Italy prosperous and powerful, Italy that—

“ Or vive (se vita è vivere in pianto)

“ Sotto quella rovina e quella sorte,

“ Ch' ha meritato l'ozio suo cotanto.”

For if you look upon this land, you will behold nought but slaughter and desolation. Fathers and children are killed, many fly for refuge to strange regions, mothers weep the fate of their daughters, ditches and streams are stained with blood, and full of human remains :

“ Dovunque tu gli occhi rivolti e giri,

“ Di lacrime la terra e sangue è pregna,

“ E l'aria d'urli, singulti e sospiri.”

Such are the fruits of Ambition. But why need I glance afar, when here in Tuscany, Ambition is hovering over the mountains, and has already scattered sparks among these envious people, sufficient to consume both town and country if they be not quickly trampled out by some better ordering of affairs.* Machiavelli here

* *Opere*, vol. v. p. 438.

alludes to the war with Urbino, begun just at that time and conducted by Lorenzo de' Medici, who started from Florence in May, 1516.

There is little worth remark in the *terzine* of the *Capitolo Pastorale*, or the Serenade in octave verse. The subject of the former leaves no opening either for satire or for philosophic reflection ; its merits should be purely poetical, and therefore Machiavelli's pen moves more languidly. The octaves are sufficiently easy, but compared with those of Poliziano and Ariosto, can command but scanty admiration. He also composed six *Canti Carnascialeschi* in different metres. Several of these are dashing and natural, but that is all. They lack the freshness and vivacity of description so often found in those of Lorenzo de' Medici, the creator of this style of poem. Consequently their abundant grossness is nothing but sheer indecency. In the first of the series, the *Canto dei Diavoli*, fiends come leaping down upon the earth, and declaring themselves the authors of all evil and all good, urge mankind to follow their lead. In the second, the *Canto d'amanti disperati e di donne*, lovers bemoan the tortures suffered by them in vain for love upon earth, and declare that they are positively happier in Hell ; the women are disposed to take pity on them, but it is now too late, the hour of love is past, and they conclude, therefore, by warning maidens not to be too coy, lest they should suffer vain remorse for their wasted hours. The third, entitled *Canto degli Spiriti beati*, is a lament on the ills by which mankind is afflicted, especially in Italy.

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"Tant è grande la sete
 "Di gustar quel paese,
 "Ch' a tutto il mondo diè la legge pria,
 "Che voi non v'accorgete
 "Che le vostre contese
 "Agl' inimici vostri apron la via.

* * * *

"Dipartasi il timore,
 "Nimicizie e rancori,
 "Avarizia, superbia e crudeltade.
 "Risorga in voi l'amore
 "De' giusti e veri onori,
 "E torni il mondo a quella prima etade
 "Così vi fien le strade
 "Del cielo aperte alla beata gente,
 "Nè saran di virtù le fiamme spente." *

From these verses it will be seen, how even amid the fun and indecency of the *Canti Carnascialeschi*, Machiavelli finds room for his usual reflections, his persistent thought of the Italian fatherland, and of ancient valour. The *Canto degli uomini che vendono le pine*, and the *Canto de' ciurmadori*, have a nearer resemblance than the rest to genuine Carnival songs. They are followed by a very short canzonet, two octaves and a sonnet. The canzonet, beginning with the words: *Se avessi l'arco e l'ale*, is believed by several modern critics to be an imitation of a Greek epigram in the *Anthologia Palatina*;† but, besides the difficulty of proving that there is any patent imitation, the only codex containing the *Anthologia* of Cefala, that is of Palatino, was made known by Salmasio some time after the death of Machiavelli. The two octaves and the sonnet have

* *Opere*, vol. v. p. 456.

† Epigram xii. No. 78, in the *Anthologia Palatina*.

not much value, and treat of love, like the other sonnet printed in the letter dated 31st January, 1515. We have already mentioned the three sonnets to Giuliano de' Medici, and the epigram on Soderini. It is quite possible that there may be other short poems by Machiavelli that are still unedited, for he frequently composed them as a pastime. In the Vatican library there is a juvenile sonnet of his, addressed to his father, and almost unintelligible, on account of being written in a jargon teeming with slang, reminding us of Burchiello. We publish it in the Appendix.*

Now coming to the literary compositions in prose, we will accord the first place to the *Dialogo sulla lingua*,

* This sonnet will be found in the Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, doc. xi., together with the famous one addressed to Giuliano de' Medici, "*Io ho, Giuliano, in Gamba un paio di geti*", taken from the same Vatican manuscript, and having certain variations deserving of notice. For copies of these sonnets we are indebted to the kindness of Signor Giulio Salvadori, who discovered them in vol. iii. of the *Codice miscellaneo vaticano* 5225 at f. 673 and f. 674. They are among many other *Capitoli* by writers of the Cinquecento, including that *Dell' Ambizione* also by Machiavelli. This, however, is in a later handwriting than that of the two sonnets, which are distinguishable from the generality of the sheets in the volume, by the coarser and browner paper upon which they are written. On comparing the characters of these two sonnets with a photographic *fac-simile* of Machiavelli's autograph, Signor Salvadori decided that they were not written by Machiavelli, although in a similar hand. "The writing is certainly of the same school," he said in conclusion, "and although more general in the first than in the second half, was in use throughout the sixteenth century. The paper, made of hemp instead of flax, undoubtedly belongs to the Cinquecento." And Professor Monaci of the Roman university (consulted by Signor Salvadori at my request) was also of the same opinion. The discovery in the Vatican of so old a copy of the sonnet to Giuliano de' Medici, among other writings of Machiavelli, seems to us to convalidate all that we have said elsewhere (vol. ii. p. 200 and fol.) regarding its authenticity.

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a discussion upon the question whether the written language of Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio should be styled Italian or Florentine. The reasons adduced by Polidori for his doubts whether this *Dialogue* were really by Machiavelli, do not appear to us of any value. He considers it impossible that Machiavelli, who had said that, at least among many ills, the coming of the barbarians had conferred upon Italy the one inestimable boon of the new language, should afterwards, as in this dialogue, harshly censure those who call it Italian rather than Florentine or Tuscan. But the dispute concerning the name implies nothing against the merit of the new tongue. Signor Polidori also finds it impossible that one who so constantly deplored the woes of Italy, should then blame Dante for having foretold such terrible ruin to Florence, adding that fortune, to prove the poet a liar, has instead led the city "to her present state of happiness and tranquillity." He interprets these words as a favourable allusion to princely rule, and cannot think, he says, that Machiavelli would have been capable of uttering them.* Nevertheless, the ex-secretary frequently praised the condition of Florence in his own time, and in fact its condition was by no means one of persistent wretchedness. There can be no allusion in the Dialogue to the princely rule that was only inaugurated after his death, and for anything that we know to the contrary the *Dialogue* may have been written even earlier than 1512, namely, in times that Machiavelli

* *Vide* Polidori's preface, to which we have frequently referred; pp. xiv. and xv.

might have unreservedly praised. Besides, all doubts raised by Signor Polidori or others, must yield to the weighty testimony of Ricci, who plainly says that this work is Machiavelli's, although partly written in a manner different from his usual style. He further adds that "Bernardo Machiavelli, son of the said Niccolò, and now seventy-four years of age, declares that he remembers hearing his father speak of it (the *Dialogue*) and often seeing it in his hands."* Although it certainly shows a certain stiffness and classicality unusual to Machiavelli, it yet contains nothing to justify the doubts so often mooted as to the authorship of the *Dialogue*. Its differences of form are not only easily to be explained by the different nature of so erudite and literary a theme; but they are few in number, and may also be met with in the *Discourses*, the *Prince*, and the *Histories*. The rest of the work is not wanting in the usual vivacity, graphic power and spontaneity. And if we examine its substance, we find comparisons, observations, and thoughts of so much acuteness and originality, and so peculiarly of the Machiavellian stamp, that all doubt is necessarily dispelled.

For this *Dialogo sulla lingua* opens with the fresh enunciation, in a somewhat grandiloquent style, of the sentiment that is seldom absent from any work of Niccolò Machiavelli, whether great or small, namely, that our chief duty is claimed by our native land, to which we all owe our entire being. He then goes on to say that he

* *Codice Ricci*, No. 692 among the Palatine Codices of the National Library in Florence, at p. 430.

has been impelled to write "by the question frequently raised during the past days, whether the idiom employed by the Florentine poets and prose writers should be named Italian, Tuscan or Florentine. Some assert that it is the adverb of affirmation that gives its special character to every tongue, and thus there would be the language of *sì*, the language of *och* and of *hvis*, as that of *yes*, of *hyo* (*ja*), etc. But if this were true, Sicilians and Spaniards would speak the same language. Accordingly, others are found to maintain that only the part of speech called the verb, is the chain and essence of a language. Therefore, in the opinion of these men, the different tongues may be distinguished by the difference of their verbs; whereas those varying in their nouns and other parts of speech, but not in their verbs, own a common origin. Now the different provinces of Italy vary a great deal as to their nouns, less as to their pronouns, and very little as to their verbs, and therefore can all be reciprocally understood with sufficient ease. There is some variety of accent in the speech of Italians, but not so much as to prevent them from understanding one another. The Tuscans, for instance, accentuate their words on the vowel sounds, while the Romagnols and Lombards suppress them. Considering, therefore, the differences existing in the Italian tongue, we must see which of its modes of speech is that which wields the pen. Our first writers, with a few rare exceptions, are all Florentines. Boccaccio tells us that he writes in the Florentine tongue; Petrarca does not mention the subject; Dante states that he writes in court language, and

condemns every special Italian tongue including the Florentine. But Dante was hostile to Florence, and censured her in all things. Besides, common speech signifies that which is rather common than special, and, *vice versa*, special signifies that which is rather particular than common, since there is no tongue in existence that has not borrowed somewhat from intercourse with others. And new doctrines and new arts must inevitably bring with them new words and modes of speech. Such words, however, become modified by the moods, cases and accents of the language into which they are introduced, and become incorporated with it, for were it otherwise, languages would be like patchwork and clumsily turned. So with us foreign words are converted into Florentine. It is in this manner that languages are enriched, but they afterwards become mongrel from over-abundance of novel expressions. It needs, however, a very long course of time to effect all this, excepting in case of an invasion, for then the language perishes altogether, and it is necessary to reconstitute it by means of its writers, as we are now doing in the case of Latin and Greek.* Now I would ask of Dante, what is there in his writings that is not Florentine?" And here, for the sake of discussion, Machiavelli begins an argument in the shape of a dia-

* Let the reader note the resemblance of these ideas with those expounded in Machiavelli's political works.—New words first enrich a language, but then, by over-increase, corrupt it. It then becomes necessary to purify it, seeking out its primitive forms in the works of its best ancient writers. Virtue fortifies States and renders them powerful. Victory and power give security, and security generates indolence, which corrupts and leads to cowardice, vice, and hence to the decay of States. In order to revive them it is necessary to re-establish them in their primitive form.

logue, to prove that with few exceptions every word employed by the immortal poet is purely Florentine.

Every language, he remarks, is necessarily more or less mixed ; but that " may be called a national tongue, " which converts words borrowed from others, to its own " use, and is sufficiently strong not to be changed by " borrowed words, but to change them, inasmuch as that " which it takes from others, it takes to itself and appropriates as its own." He then explains his meaning more clearly by resorting to one of his usual comparisons. " The armies of the Romans comprised two legions of their citizens, in all twelve thousand strong,* and twenty thousand men of other nations ; nevertheless, as the former were the real backbone of the army, so it was always known as the Roman army. And you, Dante, who have in your writings," so continues Machiavelli, " twenty legions of Florentine words, and make use of Florentine cases, tenses, moods and desinences, how can you believe that chance words can change the name and nature of a language ? If you call it the general language, because the same verbs are used throughout Italy, nevertheless these are altered so much as to be quite different. You are misled by this : that you and the other Florentine writers became so celebrated, that our vocabulary was adopted and taken into use throughout Italy. Therefore compare the books written by the other provinces before we wrote, with those written later, and you will at once discern a mighty difference. Writers of other

* This is not quite in agreement with what he says in the *Arte della Guerra. Opere*, vol. iv. pp. 282, 283.

parts of Italy now toil very hard to imitate our tongue, and yet do not always succeed, for nature is stronger than art. When they employ terms of their own, they polish them in the Tuscan fashion. Then in comedies, where it is necessary to use familiar terms and expressions, that to be known must be colloquial, all writers who are not Tuscans fail of success. For if one of these should wish to use sayings of his own district, he will make a garment of patch-work; but if he refuses to use them, being ignorant of Tuscan expressions, he will produce a maimed and imperfect piece of work. And I will cite as an example *I Suppositi* of Ariosto of Ferrara.* Here you have an elegant composition, an ornate and regular style; a plot that is well arranged and better developed; but you will find it devoid of the witticisms required for a comedy of that kind, and from no other cause than that I have mentioned, namely, because the author rejected Ferrarese sayings and did not know any Florentine ones.†

He then quotes several examples of Ferrarese modes of expression, that fit very badly with the Florentine, and concludes by saying that in order to write well we must understand all the properties of the language, and to understand them must study their sources, since otherwise we have a composition in which one part is out of harmony with the other. "Poetry passed from Provence

* From the examples given by him, it is evident that he quotes from the prose version of the *Suppositi*. This makes it probable that the *Dialogue* was written before Ariosto had versified his play, and therefore supports the theory of its being dated before 1512.

† *Opere*, vol. v. p. 19.

to Sicily, thence to Tuscany, and more especially to Florence, because there the most suitable language was to be found. And now that the language is formed, Ferrarese, Neapolitans, Venetians, are found to write well and to have very apt powers of expression, the which could never have come about had not the great Florentine writers first taught them how to forget the native barbarism, in which they were plunged by reason of their familiar dialect. It must, therefore, be concluded that there is no court language nor common language of Italy, because that to which this name has been applied is founded upon the Florentine tongue, to which as to an original source it is necessary to revert ; and accordingly our adversaries themselves, without they be truly stubborn, must acknowledge the tongue to be Florentine." *

If we consider the condition of philological science among the Italian scholars of that time ; if we consider the praise lavished even in our own day upon Leonard Aretino, merely because he had asserted the existence of a spoken Latin different from the written tongue ; when we remember that Machiavelli was neither a learned man nor a philologist, we must allow that his observations afford increased proofs of his intellectual powers. To say that the special characteristics of a language do not consist in the greater or lesser number of words that it may have in common with other tongues ; but consist in the verb, the only part of speech that really changes in the Italian language which has conjugations but no declensions, is equal to saying that

* *Opere*, vol. v. p. 21.

the special character of a language depends upon its grammar. Now this is the identical idea upon which Frederic Schlegel laid the foundation of comparative philology in 1808. And although it has hitherto escaped notice, the *Dialogo sulla lingua* clearly proves, that this idea had been first divined by Machiavelli three centuries before.

It is true that in explaining his theories, he frequently says : *certain persons hold (vogliono alcuni)*. This might lead to the supposition that he had borrowed his fundamental idea from others. But it should first be remembered that Machiavelli, as we have seen elsewhere, confessed that he found it expedient to make use of this or a like expression, whenever he had to proclaim any very new or daring theory or reflection of his own, the better to attract his readers' attention.* Besides, not only, as far as we know, is there no trace, even of the remotest kind, to be found of this idea among the scholars of his time, but almost down to the present day it has always been combated in Italy, where the general tendency of philology has been to maintain the contrary doctrine, that the distinctive character of a language is to be sought in its vocabulary. Machiavelli not only started from the opposite principle, but proved it to be his own, by deducing very just consequences from it, that were both novel and startling at that day. Certainly the times were not then ripe, nor could he be possessed of the requisite knowledge, for the promotion of the great revolution in science that has only become

* *Vide* vol. iii. p. 31 of this work.

possible in our own age. Yet even from his secondary observations, and the applications he makes of his idea, it is plain that he had the fullest appreciation of its fecundity and worth. The importance given by him to accent; his confutation of the hypothesis advanced by Dante, of a court language composed of many dialects, on the ground that it would be a patchwork language with no life in it; his explanation of the mode in which the Florentine speech, while accepting many words belonging to other dialects, assimilated, and made them its own, by subjecting them to its own desinences and special grammatical forms; all this, presented as the logical consequence of his first fundamental idea, is reasoned out in a manner reminding us of the method of a modern philologist. And this furnishes additional proof that, whenever it is a question of discovering the substantial characteristics of social, moral or intellectual phenomena, and determining their laws, the genius of Machiavelli is always displayed in its fullest might, and that his vision is not only far-piercing, but penetrates deep below the surface of things.

The authenticity of another composition in the form of an epistle, entitled *Descrizione della Peste di Firenze dell' anno 1527*,* has been called in question with much greater reason, although the theory of its genuineness is supported by the fact that we positively have a copy of it in Machiavelli's handwriting. But this autograph contains additions and corrections from the pen of Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi, to whom the entire *Descrizione*

* *Opere*, vol. v. p. 36.

is attributed,* according to the notes in another ancient hand at different pages of the manuscript itself. This leads us to suppose that, in the same way that Machiavelli had inserted a copy of the *Commedia in versi*, which it is impossible to believe to be his, in this very Codex, he also wrote out a composition of his friend Lorenzo Strozzi, who afterwards revised and corrected it in his own hand. Surely Strozzi would not have dared to add touches of his own to any composition of his celebrated friend? And all uncertainty disappears on the hastiest perusal of this *Descrizione*, which could never be attri-

* The Codex containing this autograph is that from which we have often given quotations, and which is described in the pamphlet, *Quarto Centenario*, etc., under the heading: *Libro degli autografi Machiavelliani della Magliabecchiana*. It was formerly marked among the Magliabecchian MSS. by the figures 1451, and in the Strozzi collection as No. 366. It is now preserved among the most valued possessions of the Florence National Library, and is a volume consisting of eight different MSS., of which six are Machiavelli's autographs, including this *Descrizione della Peste*. On the first sheet are the words: *Epistola fatta per la peste*, and immediately following: *hanc epistolam agit laurentius Philippi stroci, cives florentinus, qui colebant plateam strociorum apud forum, ed est multa plurcha, quia fecit illam Cum magna diligentia et studio temporis et laboris, et ob id laudo illam Cum admiratione ob elegantiam illius, et doctrinam magniam, & rem inauditam et amirabilem, quod est ista et testor Deum et homines bonos*. At the back of sheet 5a the same declaration is repeated in no less strange and incorrect language, apparently almost a first attempt at writing: *Questa Pistola compose Laurentius Philippi Strosi cives florentinus, que colebat plateam strociorum apud forum, et est plurca*. Then follows the description of the plague, in Machiavelli's handwriting, with an introductory notice, that has been already published by Polidori and others. This preface is by another hand, and is different from that to be found farther on in the copy by Machiavelli. The *Descrizione* is followed by these words, in the same handwriting as that of the very curious Latinity at the commencement. "*Copiata allibro grande nero di Lorenzo alla fini*" (then come some doubtful marks, probably indicating the number of the sheet) "*et cosi mi disse.*" Vide *Opere Minori* di N. Machiavelli, note to p. 415. Florence, Le Monnier, 1852.

buted to Machiavelli by any one acquainted with his works.

For, even leaving aside the fact that 1527 was the year in which Machiavelli died, it is by no means credible that amid the many grave thoughts by which he was at that time overwhelmed, he could have found leisure to employ himself upon a description of the plague. This scourge had begun a few years before, and the manuscript may be incorrectly dated. But how can we suppose that, either in 1527, or some years earlier, Machiavelli could have spoken of marrying again, according to the allusion in the *Descrizione*, when it is known that his wife Marietta survived him? And who, too, could credit him with the authorship of so contorted and pedantic a composition? This, for instance, is its opening period:—

“I dare not place my timid hand on the sheet, to trace
“this tedious commencement; indeed, the more do I
“ponder all these miseries in my head, so much the
“more do I shrink from the horrible description of
“them; and although I have seen everything, to speak
“of it renews my painful tears; nor do I know from
“which side I ought to make a beginning, and were it
“allowed me, I would willingly withdraw from this
“undertaking.”* It continues in the same strain, and we presently come to the following description of a lady’s charms: “Her fresh and delicate flesh was like

* *Opere*, vol. v. p. 36. This and nearly the whole of the introduction is in Machiavelli’s handwriting. Longer and no less intricate is the other in the same Codex, but by a different hand.

"unto fair ivory, yet so tender and soft as to preserve the
"traces of even the slightest touch, no less than the
"yielding and dewy young grass of a verdant meadow
"preserves the footmarks of slender little animals. But
"what shall I say of her mellifluous and delicate mouth
"placed between banks dressed with roses and privet,
"and wearing so sad an air that I do not know how it
"could be that it shone with a celestial smile! The rosy
"lips over the white and polished teeth seemed like
"burning rubies and oriental pearls mingled together.
"She had stolen from Juno the shape of her softly
"spreading nose, as from Venus her white and well-
"filled cheeks, etc."*

And to mention that a man was seated on the Spini bench, he starts with these words: "And on the nowa-days solitary bench of the Spini, etc., etc.,"† the verb only coming in some three or four lines farther on. Accordingly, Macaulay is quite justified in declaring that no external evidence could induce him to think Machiavelli guilty of so detestable a piece of writing, that would scarcely be pardonable as the production of some foolish boy student of rhetoric.‡

* *Opere*, vol. v. pp. 46, 47.

† *Ibidem*, p. 45.

‡ "Of this last composition, the strongest external evidence would scarcely induce us to believe him guilty. Nothing was ever written more detestable in matter and manner. The narrations, the reflections, the jokes, the lamentations are all the very worst of their respective kinds. A foolish schoolboy might write such a piece, and after he had written it, think it much finer than the incomparable introduction of the *Decameron*. But that a shrewd statesman, whose earliest works are characterized by manliness of thought and language, should at near sixty years of age descend to such puerility, is utterly inconceivable." Macaulay's *Essays*,

Il Dialogo dell' ira e dei modi di curarla, also written in a very contorted style, has never been attributed to Machiavelli, excepting by Poggiali and one or two others. As we have previously said, it is a translation of Plutarch's pamphlet, *On how to avoid anger*.* Regarding this, too, it will, we think, be enough to quote a few sentences serving to justify the almost unanimous verdict. This is the first sentence: "Rightly it seems to me, dearest Cosimo, do those prudent painters act, who before completely finishing their work, remove it from their sight for some time, in order that, during the interval, the eye, by losing its constant habit of regarding the painting and then beginning to look upon it afresh, may judge of it better and more accurately, and may recognize those defects in it that might otherwise have been hidden from them by continued familiarity."† We cannot think that any one will

vol. i. p. 89. By these words Macaulay shows much greater accuracy of judgment and literary taste than Leo, who harps upon the *Descrizione della Peste* in order to say harsh things of Machiavelli's moral character: "Wie leicht Machiavelli mit dem Tode umspringt, und wie er alles, was anderen schrecklich ist, mit der grössten Anmuth zu verhöhnen weiss, sieht man recht gut aus der satyrischen Erzählung einer fingirten Heirath während der Pest im Jahr 1527 in Florenz; es enthält diese Erzählung zugleich in jeder Zeile Beweise wie Machiavelli zu einer Zeit, wo ihn überall Unglück umgab, und kaum vier Wochen vor seinem eignen Tode (also nicht mehr bei jungen Jahren) seine Phantasie noch voll Bilder weiblicher Schönheit und sinnlicher Verhältnisse zu Weibern hatte." *Vide* the preface frequently quoted by us, of Leo's German translation of the letters of Machiavelli, p. xiv. note.

* In vol. ii. of this translation, p. 15, and at document v. of appendix to the same volume, p. 287 and fol.; and Appendix (II.) of Italian edition, document xviii.

† *Opere Minori*, Florence, Le Monnier, 1852, p. 626.

believe that a period of this kind, and positively one of the simplest and least involved of the whole dialogue, could possibly be attributed to Machiavelli.

The famous *Novella di Belfagor arcidiavolo* is undoubtedly his. It has neither much plot, nor much painting of character, and may be described as a witty conceit and pleasantry of the kind often to be found among our Italian *novelle*. When Pluto noticed that all who arrived in Hell agreed in complaints against their wives, to whom they attributed their perdition, he assembled his counsellors, and it was decided to investigate the truth of the matter. For this purpose the arch-fiend Belphegor was dispatched to earth in human shape, with one hundred thousand ducats in his pocket, to seek himself a wife. Coming to Florence he there married a certain Onesta, daughter of Amerigo Donati; and speedily by her pride, and extravagance, her habits and her relations, found himself reduced to poverty and despair. And the devils he had brought with him as attendants, were positively glad to return to the flames of the infernal regions. Belphegor himself was so persecuted by his creditors that at last he was obliged to avoid imprisonment by flight. Being pursued by a mob of creditors, magistrates and roughs, he was concealed and rescued by a peasant, on whom, in his gratitude, he promised to bestow vast riches in the following way. Whenever the peasant should hear of any woman possessed by an evil spirit, he was to go to exorcise it, for then he, Belphegor, would immediately quit the woman's body, so that his deliverer might earn his reward. And

on two occasions the peasant followed this advice much to his own profit. But the second time, the fiend, who had entered into the daughter of the King of Naples, said to him, Take care that this be the last time you come to turn me out; for if you try to do it again, you will bitterly repent it. So the peasant having received fifty thousand ducats from the king, and being well content with his gains, determined to go home and live quietly. But the fame of his mysterious power having spread everywhere, and the daughter of the French king Louis VII. being likewise possessed, that monarch sought his help, and would take no refusal. Accordingly, the peasant was obliged to use his power for the third time. But no sooner did he go near the princess, than the fiend reminded him of his warning, and threatened to make him repent if he did not instantly go away. On the other hand, the king would hear no reason, and threatened him with death. Thus placed between the hammer and the anvil, the peasant resorted to craft. He ordered the erection of a great wooden stand in the square of *Nôtre Dame*, upon which all the great lords and prelates of the kingdom were to be assembled. There was to be an altar in the centre of the square, and after Mass had been celebrated, the king's daughter was to be led up to it. In one corner there was to be a band of at least twenty persons, furnished with trumpets, horns, drums, pipes and other very noisy instruments, and the players were to rush towards the altar, playing as loudly as possible directly the peasant gave the signal by waving his hat in the air. All was ready; the dig-

nitaries were on the stand, the square thronged with people, mass had been performed, and the princess stood before the altar. Belpagor, meanwhile, was showering threats on the peasant, and again warned him that if he did not instantly go away something very terrible would happen to him. But the man only replied by waving his hat on high, and instantly the band advanced making a tremendous noise with their instruments. The fiend, startled by the unexpected clamour, cried out: "What does this mean?" "Alas, alas!" replied the peasant, "here is your wife coming to fetch you." At this news Belpagor did not stay to listen to anything else, but scampered back to Hell at the top of his speed, and ever after testified to the perils and tribulations of the married state.*

Some writers have pretended that Machiavelli designed this pleasant fable as an allusion to the sufferings inflicted upon him by his wife Marietta; but all the best-known facts and most authentic documents clearly prove the falsity of this assertion. Marietta, as we have seen, was a good wife to him, and her husband deserved more reproof from her, than she from him.† Others have pretended that Machiavelli was not the author of this tale, because another and but slightly different version was brought out under the name of Monsignore Giovanni Brevio in the year 1545. In 1549, however, the printers Giunti republished it in its original form, with

* *Opere*, vol. v. p. 22 and fol.

† *Vide*, among other proofs, an essay by Francesco Giampieri on *Niccolò Machiavelli and Marietta Corsini*, in the volume entitled: *Monumenti del Giardino Puccini*, pp. 275-290. Pistoia, the Cino press, 1845.

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Machiavelli's name on the title page and a declaration to the effect that "in this way they vindicated the "rights of its creator, which had been usurped by a "person desirous of enjoying the honour of another's "toil."* The original manuscript of the tale was afterwards discovered in the Florence National Library† and this put an end to all dispute, since the intrinsic tests of style and diction were all in favour of Machiavelli. The theme of Belphagor was not of his own invention, for it is to be found in the *Forty Viziers*, a Turkish book taken from an Arabian source, derived in its turn from an Indian original.‡ Therefore it came to Italy from the East, by oral tradition if not indeed in a written form, and was picked up by Machiavelli. It was afterwards borrowed by Brevio, Doni, Sansovino, and others, among whom we must not forget to include La Fontaine, who was more successful in his imitation of it, than in his other tale borrowed from *La Mandragola*. We

* On a copy of Giunti's edition, is the following inscription in the handwriting of Magliabechi: "This tale by Niccolò Machiavelli is included "among those of Brevio, and also in part ii. of Doni's Libreria, and in "canto iii. of the very nonsensical tragi-comic poem Tristarello, and "in Sansovino's collection of tales. In Machiavelli's original copy kindly "presented to me by Signor Benvenuti, there are several very interesting "variations." Signor Gargani republished a small edition of thirty numbered copies from the autograph manuscript, and eight copies bearing his name. (Florence, Dotti, 1869.) Gargani's preface contains several items of information respecting the tale.

† Class vii. No. 335.

‡ Artaud, *Machiavelli, son génie et ses erreurs*, vol. ii. p. 94. We believe this author to have been the first to observe that this tale was to be found in the *Quaranta Visiri*, which he had read in Gauthier's translation. And Professor Fausto Lasinio considers that Belphagor was imported into Italy in the *Quaranta Visiri*.

have also learnt that a tale much resembling Belphagor is a popular story at the present day even among the Southern Slaves.*

We need only record the titles of a few other short compositions, that are of little or no importance. The *Capitoli per una bizzarra compagnia*† is no more than a laughable trifle. The *Allocuzione fatta da un magistrato nell' ingresso dell' ufficio* (a magistrate's inaugural address on taking office)‡ consists only of a few general remarks on justice, with a view to the public welfare, together with a long extract from the *Divina Commedia* on the same subject. It reads like a roughly sketched beginning to some literary exercise. There is little more to be said of the *Discorso Morale*,§ which seems to have been written for recital before one of the religious confraternities abounding in Florence at that time, and treats with much unction, and not without a certain veiled irony, of the duties and advantages of charity towards our neighbours and obedience towards the Almighty. It has no further claim upon our attention.

* Prof. L. Macun, *Niccolò Machiavelli als Dichter, Historiker und Staatsman.* This is an address published on the occasion of the third centenary of the Gymnasium of Gratz. In note 2, at page 11, the author says: "Merkwürdig ist diese Novelle für die Sudslaven dadurch, dass sie dort im Volke selbst landläufig ist, wie man aus Stoja novics's *Puc'ke pri povedke*, S. 133, *Zla s'ena* (*Racconti popolari—Della cattiva moglie*) "ersehen kann." The author then inquires, how the tale could have penetrated to that part of the world? It may be replied that the fact is easily explainable by the eastern origin of the story.

† *Opere*, vol. v. p. 51. ‡ *Ibid.*, vol. v. p. 57. § *Ibid.*, vol. v. p. 61.

CHAPTER XI.

FLORENTINE HISTORIANS.

The Florentine Histories—Book first, or the general introduction.

AT the time that Machiavelli began to write his Histories, there were two schools of historians in Florence, namely, those still following in the track of Villani, and the Learned men, who had taken a totally different road. Numbers of chronicles, annals, *prioristi*, and diaries recording events as they happened day by day, were then written; and in certain Tuscan households the custom has been maintained, down to the present day. But at the time of which we write, no works of this description succeeded in achieving a deserved literary fame. The *Tumulto dei Ciompi* of Gino Capponi, the *Istorie* of Giovanni Cambi, the *Diario* of Biagio Buonaccorsi, and many other similar compositions, are certainly precious stores of information, but have very little value as works of art. Accordingly, the men of learning had stood for some time in the first rank, and as they had thrown the chroniclers into the shade and found imitators in all parts of Italy, no one but the small fry and those who were not professional *litterati* dared any longer to follow in the old course. In Florence the chief representatives of the school of learned historians had been

Leonardo Aretino and Poggio Bracciolini, and their fame was still very great and widespread. As we have noted elsewhere,* their works were written in Ciceronian Latin, and not satisfied with recording events in the order of occurrence from day to day, they tried to group them skilfully after the manner of their usual model, Titus Livy. They despised chronicles, because they aspired to the classic dignity of history, but their interpretation of such dignity consisted in magnifying the events they narrated, and transforming the smallest Florentine street riots into tremendous conflicts. Their personages were always draped in the Roman *toga*, always uttered solemn speeches. Aretino applied himself to writing, "because the glorious deeds of the Florentine people are deserving of transmission to posterity and their war with Pisa may be compared to that of the Romans with Carthage. But the difficulty of the enterprise arouses the writer's alarm, and above all the roughness of modern names, upon which it is impossible to confer any elegance."† Accordingly, Aretino's *History*, like those of the learned men in general, is void of all local colour, all spontaneous movement, and as a source of genuine information is inferior not only to the Chronicles of the Trecento, but even to later histories of altogether slighter merit.

* We have alluded to this in *Introduction*, vol. i. of this work, p. 146 and fol.

† "Nominumque denique asperitas, vix cuius cumque elegantiz patiens." Leonardo Aretino, *Istoria fiorentina tradotta in volgare* by Donato Acciajoli, *col testo a fronte*, vol. i. p. 62. Florence, Le Monnier, 3 vols., 1856, 1858, 1860. In 1861, the same publisher issued the translation in separate form, in a 12mo vol. of his *Biblioteca Nazionale*.

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In reading the histories of Aretino and Bracciolini, no one could suppose that both these writers had spent many years in Florence, and been secretaries of the Republic. They give no anecdotes, no colouring of time and place, no portraits from life. Yet even in these works, the Humanists show certain distinguishing merits of their own. It is true that they grouped their facts in a purely literary way, for, whether consciously or unconsciously, eloquence was their sole aim, and they were still faithful to the division of history by years, after the fashion of the old chroniclers, just as though each year necessarily formed a separate period. Nevertheless, this extrinsic, exterior unity served later to open the way to the intrinsic unity of the logical connection of facts; and although it must be confessed that the Humanists never attained to this, they instinctively aimed at it. Occasionally Aretino says so clearly enough, for he even declares that he intends to explain "the causes of events, and deliver judgment on things past and gone." * And to this merit was added the other of critical inquiry, which was certainly initiated by the Humanists.

Unsatisfied with the plain narration of contemporary events, and desirous to embrace a much vaster field, they were compelled to employ research, and ended by weighing and comparing their sources of information. We already know that Flavio Biondi was the first and most successful of these men, as being the real inaugurator of historic criticism, while others were laying the foundations of philosophical and philological criticism. He not

* L. Aretino, *Istorie*, loc. cit.

only examined and discussed the amount of credence to be assigned to the authorities consulted by him ; but even in relating contemporary facts gleaned from eye-witnesses, he was careful to examine whether such witnesses were in a position to know the truth and to chronicle it faithfully. He sometimes shows wonderful penetration, in extracting even from the study of a popular saying proofs of the credibility of certain historic facts.* Criticism seemed a spontaneous growth in those days, and the writers who first essayed it were barely aware of what they were undertaking. We see that Aretino put aside all the current and fabulous traditions concerning the origin of Florence, and sought its primitive history in such information as could be gleaned from classic authors regarding the Etruscans and the colonies planted by the Romans in Tuscany. Further on, in a brief sketch of the general history of the Middle Ages, he attempted to collect some confused notices on the origin of the Communes. All this constitutes his first book. In the second book he begins the special history of Florence and carries it on through eleven others down to the commencement of the fifteenth century. But this part of his work is devoid of any original research or novel information ; everything is sacrificed to classicality

* Some new monographs on Flavio Biondo have been recently published : *Flavio Biondo sein Leben und seine Werke. Inaugural Dissertation* von Alfred Masius. Leipzig, Teubner, 1879 ; P. Buchholz, *Die Quellen der Historiarum Decades des Flavii Blondus, Inaugural Dissertation*, Naumburg, Sieling, 1881. And some important notices upon the same author by A. Wielmanns appear in the *Göttingische gelehrten Anzeigen* of 1879.

of form, and the internal events of the Republic are neglected for the sake of pompous periods in honour of its military enterprises. The same was done by Bracciolini, who after rapidly tracing in six or seven pages the history of the Republic down to 1350, then slackens his pace, and devotes himself solely to a magniloquent account of campaigns that in his pages assume the proportions of the wars of ancient Rome.* He writes with less critical power and greater haste than Aretino, but also with greater vivacity and an easier Latin style. This latter merit sufficed to make his book more popular among his contemporaries.

But learned history, too, was in its decline in Machiavelli's day. Aretino and Bracciolini, who had given it renown, were already of a past generation. The Italian tongue being now held in esteem, Italian ambassadors and statesmen having entered upon serious and persevering study of political events, a different treatment of history was demanded. It now had to be written in the national idiom, had to be eloquent, and lively, and founded on study of reality, on knowledge of human nature and of the true causes of facts that must have some logical connection. In short, the modern form of history, that sought by us all even at the present day,

* To give an idea of the scanty attention accorded by him to internal events, this is how he speaks of the very serious revolt known as the *Tumulto dei Ciompi*: "Quieta ab externis bellis civitate, pax in dissensiones domesticas versa est. Nam civiles discordiæ e vestigio civitatem invasere: quæ pestis omni externa bello perniciosior est; inde enim et rerum publicarum interitus et urbium sequitur eversis." And this is all that he says on the subject. Poggii, *Historia Fiorentina*, p. 78. Venetiis, Hertz, 1715.

was on the point of coming into existence. For this reason, when the friends of Machiavelli discovered the new historic style in his *Vita di Castruccio Castracani*, they were prodigal of their praise and encouraged him by all means to pursue that branch of composition. It should not, however, be forgotten that Guicciardini had already written his *Storia Fiorentina*, of which we have before spoken. And although this was only a juvenile work, left unpublished until our own day and unknown to all in his own times, yet it has the substantial characteristics of the civil and modern history that was one of the most original creations of the Italians of the Renaissance. It is only in the limitation of his narrative to almost exclusively contemporary events, and his partial adherence to the old division by years, that his work shows any lingering trace of connection with the old-fashioned chronicles or annals. For his narrative shows marvellous graphic power and precision, as well great as accuracy of research from original documents. His logical connection of events, analysis of the nature of politicians, exact description of parties and personal ambitions, and above all of the action exercised upon events, princes, party-leaders, and popular passions, give this history an essentially original and modern character.

Machiavelli entirely broke away from the chronicle form. Yet he was unacquainted with Guicciardini's juvenile work. For its author, being overwhelmed with business, thought it of little importance, and seems to have kept it almost concealed. When commissioned,

through the intervention of Cardinal de' Medici, to write the history of Florence, Machiavelli determined to begin his narrative from the year 1434. That was the year in which *Cosimo il Vecchio* returned from exile practically a potentate, and the power of the Medici was at last consolidated. The events of preceding times had been already treated by Aretino and Bracciolini, "*two most excellent historians*." * He was, however, speedily obliged to recognize that they had only spoken of external wars, while as regarded civil dissensions and internal enmities and their effects they had either preserved total silence or merely made a few casual remarks. And this was their mistake, since no lesson can be more useful to those that govern than that which teaches the *causes* of enmities and factions, especially in a city like Florence, where factions were of infinite number, brought about exile, death and devastation, and yet instead of hindering the prosperity of the Republic, seemed on the contrary to augment it.

This, then, was the lesson Machiavelli proposed to teach, and his promise was not confined to empty words like those in Aretino's history, but was the leading idea that permeates his whole work, constitutes its character, demonstrates its great originality, and renders its author the real originator of civil and political history.

The work is divided into eight books, forming three parts that are very distinct from one another. The first is a general introduction to the history of the Middle Ages for the purpose of inquiring into the historical

* Proem to the *Istorie Fiorentine*, *Opere*, vol. i. p. cli.

origin of the Commune, and forming a clear idea of the new civilization that arose after the fall of the Roman empire. This book, starting from the barbarian invasions, extends to the first years of the fifteenth century, and may be regarded as a separate work. The three following books are devoted to the civil and internal history of Florence, from its origin down to Cosimo's return in 1434. The last four carry on the narrative from that date down to 1492, the year of the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent. And at this point the author again changes his method, seemingly unwilling to dwell upon internal vicissitudes of the Republic, that would have obliged him to give a minute account of the destruction of liberty by the Medici. For as Machiavelli wrote by command of Cardinal de' Medici, to whom, when Pope, the work was afterwards dedicated, he was naturally obliged to avoid a theme that he was neither able nor willing to treat with the stony impassibility shown by Guicciardini in his *Storia Fiorentina*. He therefore dwelt chiefly on the external wars carried on during those years by the captains of adventure, and thus was able to demonstrate their harmfulness, the uselessness of their troops, and the dangers they entailed upon the Italian States. Then follow the *Frammenti storici*, that were to have constituted the ninth book, which was left incomplete.

The first book has been much praised and indeed extolled by the critics. The idea of narrating for the first time, in broad outline, the general history of the Middle Ages, was regarded by them as a new and

original conception ; they even sought to attribute great learning to this work, and a novel and exact method of arrangement giving prominence to all leading facts, and leaving aside secondary matters, so that, in their opinion, from Machiavelli's day to our own, it has always been necessary to imitate him in these respects.* But to put things on a right footing, we must start by remembering that there was nothing new in the idea of a general history of the Middle Ages. Flavio Biondo had already written a similar history on a large scale, and later Leonardo Aretino had made it the principal theme of his first book, as was afterwards done by Machiavelli. And as regards the latter's erudition, it must be admitted that he derived it all from Biondo, often giving a summary and sometimes a literal translation of his work.† Many errors of fact were merely transferred

* "Machiavelli hat in diesem ersten Abschnitte, der gleichsam eine "Einleitung in die florentinische Specialgeschichte bildet, die Epochen der "italienischen Geschichte bis zum xv. Jahrhundert hin so geschieden, dass "seitdem keiner seine Spur verlassen konnte, ohne sogleich Mangel an "Einsicht in die Sache zu verrathen." This is the opinion expressed by Gervinus in his *Historische Schriften*, p. 165.

† Blondi Flavii forlivenis, *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum*, libri xxxi. Basilleae, ex officina Frobeniana, 1531. As to the name of this writer, called by some Biondo Flavio, and by others Flavio Biondo, the reasons leading to the use of both forms may be found in the previously quoted work of Masius.

I should also observe that a compendium of Flavio Biondo's history was made by Pope Pius II., and was afterwards translated into Italian: *Abreviatio Pii II. Pont. max. supra Decades Blondi ab inclinatione imperii usque ad tempora Joannis vicesimi tertii Pont. maxi.* Venetiis per Thomam Alexandrinum, anno salutis MCCCCLXXXIII. iii. kalendas iulii. *Le historie del Biondo da la declination de l'imperio di Roma insino al tempo suo (che vi corsero circa mille anni), ridotte in compendio da Papa Pio, e tradotte per Lucio Fauno in buona lingua volgare*, vol. i., Venice, 1543 ; vol. ii., Venice,

Machiavelli's "History of Florence." 245

from the earlier to the later work, and Machiavelli also borrowed from the same source all that was best in his general arrangement of materials, which at other times he often threw into wilful and unnecessary confusion. Nevertheless, having to compress into sixty octavo pages the entire contents of an enormous folio, it was impossible for him to produce a very exact imitation. Besides, in Machiavelli's work we meet with a new conception of general politics, far above the capacity of Biondo, which permeates the whole of this first book, and endows it, as we shall see, with a special value of its own. But first let us speak of its imitative points.

After a few brief remarks on the invasions of the barbarians in general, Machiavelli says that after the repulse of the Cimbri by Marius, the Visigoths were the next invaders, and these were so thoroughly routed by Theodosius that they submitted to his sway and served under his banners. But when at his decease he was succeeded by his sons, Arcadius and Honorius, these were advised by Stilicho to refuse payment to the Visigoths: whereupon the latter, to revenge themselves, chose Alaric for their king, and attacked and pillaged

per Michel Tromezino, 1550. This is the edition in the National Library at Florence.

It naturally occurred to us that, to save time and trouble, Machiavelli might have made use of this compendium in his epitome of Biondo's narrative; but careful examination compelled us to recognize that on the contrary he had worked from the original. Many expressions and sometimes whole periods existing in Biondo's work, and that are omitted in the compendium of Pius II., reappear in Machiavelli, thus dispelling all doubt. For that reason we will cite a few of the fragments borrowed by Machiavelli.

Rome. All this narrative is imitated from Biondo, and its concluding part is almost a literal translation.* It continues in the same way. The account of the passage of the Vandals into Africa at the summons of Bonifacius, who governed there in the name of the empire, is likewise copied from Biondo. The curious and erroneous notices upon England were also derived by Machiavelli from the same source. The portrait of Theodoric is more original ; nevertheless, occasional sentences betray that in penning his description the author had not entirely forgotten to refer to Biondo's work. He relies still more upon it in speaking of the Longobards, and follows it closely in treating of the Greeks, and especially of Narsetes and Longinus. At points where the very devout Biondo indulged in lengthy passages on the popes and their history, Machiavelli ceases to follow him, relates but few events, and indulges instead in many reflections of his own. But when he speaks of the Communes, we again come upon traces of the parent author. And the same occurs wherever there is simple narrative without any theoretical reflections. For these latter were always Machiavelli's own, never copied, nor imitated by him from any source. Even the account of the origin of Venice, so highly extolled for its eloquence, and which has all the distinctive qualities of Machiavelli's style, seems to have been mainly copied from the

* Compare *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 2, 3 ; *Blondi Historiarum*, etc., pp. 7, 8 ; *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 4, 5 ; *Blondi Historiarum*, etc., pp. 20, 21 ; *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 45, 46 ; *Blondi Historiarum*, p. 31 ; *Opere*, vol. i. p. 13 ; *Blondi Historiarum*, pp. 101, 102 ; *Opere*, vol. i. p. 13 ; *Blondi Historiarum*, pp. 98, 99.

same model. Comparison of the two writers will suffice to prove the truth of all that we have said.

Nor can it be allowed that Machiavelli deserves the further praise accorded to him on the score of his logical co-ordination of events, his division of them into principal and secondary, and his dwelling on the former while hastily skimming the latter. We find on the contrary, that instead of an objective arrangement of his facts, he disposed them according to a fixed idea, to which he sometimes forced them to conform. And it is quite clear that the events he dwells upon at greatest length are not those of the highest intrinsic importance, but rather those throwing the best light upon his leading idea, for he often shows the strangest neglect for everything that cannot subserve that end. Indeed, both the merits and defects of the work now under examination are directly traceable to its author's ruling idea. It needs but few words to show in what that idea consisted. It will offer itself spontaneously to our view, as soon as we begin a rapid and summary review of the book.

After alluding to the earlier Germanic invasions, their causes and origin, Machiavelli pauses to give a hasty account of the capture and sack of Rome by Alaric and his Visigoths; of the irruptions of the Huns under Attila and of the Vandals led by Genseric, and then comes down to the invasion of Odoacer, King of the Eruli, who, "quitting his dominions on the Danube, assumed the title of King of Rome, and was the first of the popular chieftains then ravaging the world, to make

a settled abode in Italy." * But he passes rapidly over this part of his work. The first figure that he pauses to contemplate and describe with special interest, placing it in high relief, and towering like a giant over the beginning of his narrative, is that of Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths, who after vanquishing Odoacer succeeded to his throne with the title of King of Italy, and tried to reduce the country to order by preserving and restoring Roman institutions. At this point Machiavelli is fired with enthusiasm; he cannot hurry on at his usual pace, when met, as it were, on the threshold of his history by a true and genuine presentment of the Prince-reformer, that was his life-long ideal. Accordingly he was instantly fascinated by Theodoric. And the better to make the real character he describes correspond with his ideal hero, he is careful while always following the lines of Biondo's work, to omit or attenuate certain details reminding us too clearly that the real individual in question was a barbarian conqueror instead of a deliverer. Thus, where Biondo states that Theodoric not only prevented all Romans and Italians from entering the army, and even from bearing weapons, Machiavelli says "he enlarged Ravenna, restored Rome, and "save in the matter of military discipline, gave back "every other honour to the Romans."† He concludes

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 7. Sometimes even the simplest phrases of this first book remind us of Biondo: "Sed jam ad barbarorum regem qui primus "Romam et Italiam possedit, revertamur." Blondii Flavii, *Historium*, etc., p. 31.

† Biondo, having mentioned that Theodoric restored the monuments and institutions of the Romans, goes on to say: "Prohibuit autem edicto "et curam impendit attentioem, ne quis Romanus aut paterna origine

by remarking that if his numerous virtues both in peace and war had not been stained by certain cruelties towards the end of his life, as for instance by the murder of Boetius, and of Symmachus, his memory would be deserving in all respects of the highest honour. "By means of his virtue and goodness, not Rome and Italy alone, but all other parts of the Western Empire being freed from the continual shocks endured for so many years from many barbarian invasions, were now relieved and restored to good order and exceeding prosperity."* "And hereupon, for the sake of giving added greatness and lustre to the figure of his hero, Machiavelli digresses into an eloquent description of all the woes and calamities, that before Theodoric's time, namely, under Arcadius and Honorius, Italy had endured. "Laws, manners, and languages had been changed," he tells us; "many cities had been destroyed and others founded, any one of the which things, much less all of them together, or even the mere thought of them, much less the sight and suffering of them, would be enough to terrify even the firmest and most constant mind. . . . Amid so many changes, not the least in importance was the change of religion, since in the conflict between the habits of the old faith and the miracles of the new, very grave tumults and disputes arose among men." "Not only was the old religion

"*Italus, nedum militaret, sed arma domi haberet.*" Biondo, op. cit. p. 34. We should also note, that this passage of Biondo, partly reproduced, if in a changed form, by Machiavelli, is altogether absent from the compendium by Pius II.

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 8, 9.

"at war with the new, but the Christian faith being
 "divided and sub-divided into various sects and
 "Churches, was lacerated internally." "Therefore, being
 "compassed about by so much persecution, men bore
 "their inward terror stamped on their features, since
 "besides the infinite ills they had to endure, the greater
 "number of them, unable even to cast themselves on
 "the mercy of God, in whom all the wretched are accus-
 "tomed to place their hopes, inasmuch as the majority
 "being uncertain to what Divinity they should turn,
 "died a miserable death deprived of all succour or
 "consolation. Therefore Theodoric deserved no slight
 "praise, as the first to make all these evils subside,
 "so that during the thirty-eight years that he reigned
 "in Italy, he restored it to so much greatness, that
 "no traces of the old sufferings were any longer to
 "be seen." * Here the extent of the writer's enthusiasm
 is revealed by the rising eloquence of his style.

The death of Theodoric is followed by the dominion
 of the Greeks through the conquests of Belisarius and
 Narsetes. Then the latter, roused to indignation against
 the Grecian Emperor, summoned the Longobards, who
 became the rulers of Italy. Instead of uniting the
 country, they divided it into thirty dukedoms, and were
 thus not only prevented from establishing their rule over
 the whole of it, but gave the popes occasion to acquire
 increasing prominence, and to govern the country at
 their will by fostering its divisions. In fact, when the
 pontiffs perceived that notwithstanding their stratagems

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 9-11.

they were at the mercy of the Longobards, and might no longer hope for assistance from the Grecian Emperor, whose power had declined, they called the Franks into Italy." "Accordingly, all the wars made by the barbarians upon Italy in these times were chiefly promoted by the popes, and nearly all the barbaric hordes that swept over the land had come at their call. The which course of proceeding is still pursued in our own day, and has kept and still keeps Italy disunited and defenceless. Therefore, in describing the events that have happened from those times to the present, we shall no longer have to relate the fall of the empire, which has been cast down, but the rise of the pontiffs and of those other princes who then ruled in Italy until the coming of Charles VIII. And it will be shown how the popes, first by their edicts, then by these and force of arms combined with indulgences, commanded both terror and respect; and how by their evil use of either attribute, they have lost the former, and only maintain the latter at the pleasure of others." *

And this is the second idea that is always prominent throughout the first book of the *Storie*. On the one hand the Prince-reformer, who seeks to re-unite Italy, relieve her from her miseries and woes and give her happiness; on the other the popes, who, to maintain their own power, keep the country divided, plunge it in desolation, and are therefore the objects of Machiavelli's hatred. All this is urged and reiterated by him both

* Vol. i. p. 18.

with force and eloquence in a book written by command of and dedicated to a Pope. Such was the Machiavelli, depicted to us as cunning, dissimulating and false. On the contrary, at all moments, no matter to whom he addressed himself, nor to what extent his words might be offensive to his listeners or injurious to himself, he was never able either to hide or to modify his scientific and political conceptions. Not even in the present instance, when he required the Pope's help for the continuation of the work he had begun at his request. Fortunately, the temper of the times was favourable to him, since it granted ample liberty of thought and speech on all similar topics. And, in fact, Clement VII. was by no means offended by the freedom and severity of his language.

At any rate, Machiavelli continued his narrative in the same relentless tone, relating how the Franks came when summoned, and made the famous concessions which established the foundation of the temporal power of the Popes. Charlemagne was consecrated Emperor by the Lord's anointed, to whom he had given fresh power over the earth. On his death, the empire, being first divided among his sons, was transferred to Germany, and Italy traversed a period of the utmost disorder, during which various attempts were made to create a national monarchy. These attempts, however, were not only unsuccessful, but ended by subjecting Italy to the sway of the Othos, under whose rule, at a later date, the Communes began to arise. Meanwhile, the Popes, always faithful to their traditions, always covetous of authority and power, first

deprived the Roman people of their right of acclaiming the Emperor, then of that of electing the Head of the Church, and finally set them the example of deposing an emperor. Thereupon some sided with the empire, others with the Papacy, "thus sowing the seed of the "Guelph and Ghibelline humours, so that, as soon as "Italy were freed from barbarian invasions, it might be "torn by internal struggles." *

In treating of the mighty conflict between the Papacy and the Empire, begun by Emperor Henry II. and Pope Alexander II., and continued under Gregory VII., Machiavelli supplies hardly any details ; he does not even mention the great Pope by name, but dilates in general terms upon the haughtiness, pertinacity, and good fortune of the popes ; and how, after the humiliation inflicted by them on the Emperor at Canossa, they found new allies in the Normans, who had founded the kingdom of Naples, and were very obsequious to the Church. The popes, however, he says, were not satisfied even then, but were always planning new undertakings. Urban II., being detested in Rome, and not thinking that the divisions of Italy sufficiently ensured his safety, had recourse to a noble idea. He went to France to preach a crusade against the Infidels, and so greatly inflamed the minds of men, that the campaign in Asia against the Saracens was decreed, "and many kings and "many peoples helped on the enterprise with gold, "and many private individuals fought in it without any "recompense. So great was then the power of religion

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 25.

"over the minds of men, stirred by the example of those
"that were at its head." *

And if the will of a Pope was the sole origin of the Crusades, the general and multiple consequences of that mighty event were all reduced, according to Machiavelli, to the institution of the order of the Knights Templars, the Knights of Jerusalem, and a few conquests in the East. "At various times there occurred sundry vicissitudes, in which many nations and special individuals "acquired celebrity." † This is all that he says.

At this point another consideration presents itself. Not the Crusades only, but all the greatest historical events, have in Machiavelli's eyes none but an individual and personal cause. The Visigoths under Alaric came into Italy through the treason of Stilicho ; the Vandals crossed from Spain to Africa at the summons of Bonifacius, of whom Etius had caused the destitution, and they entered Italy at the call of Eudoxia, who sought for revenge ; the Longobards came because Narsetes persuaded their king Alboin to essay the new enterprise, and so likewise the Crusades were provoked and started almost by mere caprice on the part of Urban II. The general, impersonal causes and consequences of all these events are altogether absent from Machiavelli's history. If he concerns himself with religion, it must be in the shape of an institution, or a Church, or be personified in the Pope ; he cannot concern himself with the progress of civilization unless it assume the form of law, State, government, or of some great political character. And

* *Opere*, pp. 27, 28.

† *Ibidem*, p. 28.

as in the *Prince* and the *Discourses*, he confers unbounded power upon his legislator, making him capable of establishing or destroying a Republic, a monarchy, any kind of government at his own free will, so in his history he regards individual resolve, energy and intelligence as the sole causes of all the greatest events. And the great men promoting such events are neither formed, inspired, nor endowed with strength by the people ; but, on the contrary, it is they who impose their will upon the people, and imbue it with their own ideas. This is the key unlocking to us at the same time the secret of his historical and of his political system. It is true that the mediæval legend had already devised similar personal explanations of historical facts. But for the Middle Ages man was always a blind agent in the hands of Providence, that alike guided peoples and captains, emperors and popes. With the humanists of the fifteenth century, Providence disappeared from the pages of history, and legends were transformed into exclusively personal explanations. There is an abundance of these in the work by Biondo that Machiavelli had before his eyes ; but it was the latter's part to weave them together into a regular system of history, to serve as the basis of his political system. Both therefore are derived from the same source, namely, from the same method of regarding mankind and society : they almost constitute the two aspects in which his conception appears to us, according to our point of view. Like his political writings, his history has but little to tell us either of manners, letters, arts, commerce or religion. It treats only of conquerors

and conquered, of the means by which victory is secured, and of the causes leading to defeat; but most of all it treats of States and their founders, of those that alter and those that destroy them. All other problems, activities and considerations are almost indifferent to him.

Carrying on his narrative, Machiavelli touches very lightly upon the conflict of the Communes with Frederic Barbarossa, and on the assistance then furnished them by the Pope. On the other hand he devotes more space to an account of the reprimand inflicted by Pope Alexander III. on King Henry of England, "a reprimand to which no private person of our own time would consent to submit." * He then recurs to the subject of the accustomed wiles of the popes, relating how, on the extinction of the Norman line at Naples, being unable to seize the kingdom for themselves, they caused it to be occupied by the Hohenstauffen. And after speaking of Frederic II., without saying a word of the important part played by him as a promoter of culture, he dwells upon the fact that the popes, with their constant restlessness and jealousy, summoned Charles of Anjou to make war upon that emperor's descendants, and gave him the investiture of the kingdom. But when Charles, after his victories in the field, was also made a Roman Senator, they found his power too great, and quickly stirred the Emperor Rudolph to arms against him.

"In this way the pontiffs, now in the cause of religion, now in that of their own ambition, never desisted from

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 31.

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"exciting fresh feuds in Italy and arousing new wars ;
"and no sooner did they establish the power of any
"prince, than they repented of it and sought to compass
"his downfall, nor would they permit that any province
"which they were too weak to seize, should be possessed
"by another. And princes trembled, for always, whether
"by fight or flight, the popes remained victors." * The
popes degenerated in all things, owing to their im-
moderate ambition. Nicholas III. (1277-81) was the
first to inaugurate nepotism, and his successors quickly
exceeded all bounds even in that.

"Hence, just as in these former times there has never
"been any mention of the nephews or kinsmen of any
"pontiff, so from this time forward history will be found
"to be so crowded with them that we shall soon have to
"speak of the sons of popes, for indeed but one thing
"now remains for these latter to attempt, namely, that
"after having hitherto sought to bequeath principedoms
"to their sons, they should now seek in future to leave
"them heirs to the Papacy." †

And their ambition swelled to such enormous dimen-
sions, that Boniface VIII. turned his spiritual as well as
his temporal weapons against his enemies the Colonna.
"The which, while working some injury to them (the
"Colonna), wrought far more to the Church, since those
"weapons that had been virtuously employed in the
"cause of faith, began to lose their edge, when turned
"against Christians from motives of personal ambition.
"And thus from undue craving to satisfy their appetites

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 37.

† *Ibidem*, vol. i. p. 39.

"the pontiffs gradually found themselves stripped of
"their arms." *

Other political events, even when of serious importance, as for example, the Sicilian Vespers, the strife of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, and the vicissitudes of the kingdom of Naples, are barely touched upon, while there is continual mention of every fact in any way tending to justify the political sympathies or antipathies of the author, or to support his theories. We are thus shown with increasing clearness, that Machiavelli aimed at no objective arrangement of facts in accordance with their intrinsic value, and certainly achieved none. On the contrary, his constant object was to find in history the corroboration of his own scheme of politics ; and this was no very difficult task, seeing that he had first derived it from history, and was not over scrupulous as to exactness of detail. He passes very lightly over the Italian journey of Henry VII. and the numerous consequences that resulted from it, and indulges in a far longer description of the perfidious wiles and stratagems by which the Visconti, and Matteo in particular, gained possession of Milan and expelled the Della Torre. He gives his own colouring to these events, in which he again traces the arts of the adventurer-prince, a theme of which he never wearies. Further on, after the recital of other occurrences, Machiavelli, without any apparent motive, suddenly goes a long way back, to describe the origin of Venice. He then meets with another personage compelling his attention, and this is the tribune Cola di

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 40.

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Rienzo, who, had he ended as he had begun, would have been another of his most dearly admired characters. In fact, he at first speaks of him with enthusiasm, but quickly turns away in contempt, on seeing him forsake, without any reason, his glorious and promising enterprise of the re-constitution of the Roman republic.* He then proceeds to describe the disorders of Italy; the schism in the Church; the removal of the papal seat to Avignon and its restoration to Rome; the Councils of Pisa and Constance; the ambitious designs of the Visconti, especially of Giovanni Galeazzo; the strange vicissitudes of Giovanna II. of Naples; the military enterprises of Sforza, Braccio di Montone, and the other Italian condottieri, who, from this moment, as Machiavelli tells us, were the destruction of the national arms.

He finally concludes by a sweeping glance at the political conditions of Italy at the beginning of the fifteenth century. After enumerating all the different States and potentates that kept it divided, he winds up with these words: "All these leading potentates were "without forces of their own. Duke Philip,† locked in "his private chambers, and admitting no one to his "presence, carried on his campaigns by means of his "commissaries. The Venetians, as they turned their "attention to the mainland, stripped themselves of the "arms that had won them glory by sea, and, following "the fashion of other Italians, administered their States "by government at second-hand. The Pope not being "well able to carry arms, by reason of his frock and

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 49.

† Filippo Maria Visconti.

"Queen Joan of Naples, by reason of her sex, did from necessity that which the rest had done by evil choice. Even the Florentines were subject to the same needs, for having extinguished their nobility, through their frequent dissensions, and their republic having fallen into the hands of traders, they followed the rule and fortune of others."

"The armies of Italy therefore had become mercenary, and confided to *condottieri*, who made a business of fighting, and who being all connected by common interests, had reduced war to a game in which no one was victor." "Indeed at last they brought it to such utter degradation, that any mediocre captain endowed with the faintest spark of the ancient valour, might have disgraced them all, to the admiration of the whole of Italy, who now by her own foolishness held them all in honour. Therefore of these slothful princes and most despicable armies my history will be full, but before coming down to that part of it, I must go back to recount the origin of Florence, according to the promise made by me at the commencement." * And he then begins his second book, which is actually the first of the history of Florence.

To sum up : Italy after being overrun by barbarians, owing to the decline of the Empire and the crime of those who from jealousy or motives of personal hatred had invoked foreign help, enjoyed a brief interval of peace and happiness when the wise prince Theodoric succeeded in binding it into a single State.

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 59-69.

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Upon his death, however, all future attempts failed to keep the country united, and chiefly by fault of the popes, who, to augment their own power, sought to keep it divided, and were always summoning fresh barbarians and fresh foreigners to lacerate and trample upon it. From the same cause all the endeavours of the Communes to deliver it were vain, and equally vain the efforts of other princes to keep it united. Finally Communes and princes alike fell into the hands of the mercenary armies, that accomplished both their ruin and that of the whole country, which was now exposed to the blows of all who cared to strike ; wherefore, with the entry of Charles VIII., the series of invasions and calamities began afresh. Such is the conception of the first book of the *Storie*, a conception that naturally leads to another. The sole remedy for these evils is the institution of a national army, under the rule of a prince able to organize and command his troops, and to use them for the defence and unity of the country, by abasing the power of the Papacy, emancipating and fortifying the State, and leaving at his death a legacy of good laws and civil institutions towards the establishment of liberty. He who shall accomplish this, will be worthy of a place with the gods.

It is now time to see what Machiavelli has to tell us of the history of Florence, in the three following books.

CHAPTER XII.

The Istorie Fiorentine—Bks. ii., iii., and iv. on the domestic history of Florence, down to the triumph of the Medici.

THE second book opens with the foundation of Florence, to which only a few words are devoted, and then passes on to the year 1215, and relates the Buondelmonti tragedy, to which it attributes the division of the city into the Guelph and Ghibelline factions. The intervening years between 1215 and 1250, are passed over in silence, for like Aretino, Machiavelli only starts with a consecutive narrative of Florentine history from the latter year, and carries it down, in this second book, to 1348. He thus compresses into the space of eighty pages the whole vast period forming the subject of the lengthy chronicles of Giovanni Villani. He makes perpetual use of this author, but only once mentions his name together with that of Dante Alighieri.* But he makes use of him in a way very dissimilar to his previous treatment of Flavio Biondo's work. He puts aside all the fabulous traditions recorded by Villani on the origin of Florence; all the numerous chapters devoted to general European history, and even those treat-

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 63.

ing of the external wars of the Republic. On the other hand, he details every account of internal divisions, revolutions, and civil reforms, and arranges them in his own way. Comparison of the narratives given by the two writers of the Buondelmonti tragedy,* the revolutions and reforms of 1250,† 1267,‡ and 1280,§ the circumstances relating to Giano della Bella, and the Decrees of Justice of 1293,|| at once proves that Machiavelli always adhered to his original authority. This is confirmed more than once by the very blunders that he makes, sometimes by the fault of Villani, sometimes by failing to give a faithful interpretation of the latter's meaning. Being absorbed in his new conception, and therefore in his proposed new arrangement of Florentine history, he proceeded with a certain hurriedness, without too scrupulously weighing the exactness of minute particulars, dwelling much upon events that suited his purpose, and often neglecting others that were of real importance. And by compressing into so small a compass the numerous events scattered through the different chapters of the chronicle, he sometimes assigns to a single year incidents that had occurred at distant intervals, and is occasionally inaccurate as to the number of councils, and the nature of institutions, especially in

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 66-68; Villani, *Cronica*, bk. v. chaps. xxxviii. and xxxix. Even the catalogue of Guelph and Ghibelline families is identical in both writers.

† *Opere*, vol. i. p. 69; Villani, *Cronica*, bk. vi. chap. xxix.

‡ *Opere*, vol. i. p. 76; Villani, *Cronica*, bk. vii. chaps. xvi., xvii.

§ *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 77, 78; Villani, *Cronica*, bk. vii. chap. lxxix.

|| *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 79-86; Villani, *Cronica*, bk. vii. chaps. viii., xii., xxvi., xxxviii., xxxix.

cases where Villani employs a political terminology, of which the precise significance was beginning to be lost in the sixteenth century.

After a few general remarks upon colonies, Machiavelli tells us that Florence descended from the Etruscan city of Fiesole, whose merchants forsook the hill and established themselves on the banks of the Arno, where Roman colonists enlarged the infant town, which afterwards conquered Fiesole. Having said this, he quickly leaps to the year 1215, and tells the story of Buondelmonti, the incident to which, as we have said, he attributes the origin of the Guelphs and Ghibellines in Florence. And he never perceives that, in the preceding chapters, Villani had described a series of contests between the Florentine Commune and the barons of the rural district outside—ending by the subjection of the latter, and their enforced residence within the city—that, chiefly owing to the Uberti, led to the origin of civil war long before the year 1215. But no sooner, with another long stride to 1250, does Machiavelli begin the narrative of less remote and less obscure events, than he launches a couple of remarks throwing an unexpected light on the history of the internal revolutions of Florence. He discerns that the Ghibellines were not only the imperial party, but the party of the aristocrats and the men of influence, whereas the Guelphs were the party of the Church and the populace. Consequently, the divisions and revolutions of Florence were defined and regulated by two different orders of causes and effects, namely, some internal and others external. On

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the one hand, the vicissitudes of the Empire and the Church, of the Suabians and Angevins of Naples ; on the other the natural antipathies between nobles and people in the cities, and the increase of labour and commerce that gave strength to the latter, while the withdrawal to a distance and the weakness of the Empire lessened the power of the former ; these were the determining causes of Florentine parties and factions. When Frederic II.'s power was in the ascendant, he immediately favoured the Uberti, chiefs of the Ghibellines, and the Guelphs were expelled. When Frederic II. died (1250), the burghers, who were Guelphs, became masters of the city, and established a new and more democratic government by means of the so-called *Costituzione del Primo Popolo*.

Machiavelli gives an enthusiastic description of this popular constitution, but in so doing, falls into many serious mistakes. He believes the constitution to have been formed by means of an agreement between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, whereas it was made by the former to the injury of the latter, and especially of the nobles. He believes it to have been the first free constitution in Florence, stating that the Florentines "now thought the moment arrived to assume a form of "free government," and never mentioning the preceding government by means of Consuls, and the institution of the Podestà, established in 1207 according to the chroniclers, and earlier still according to the documents of the time. What is still worse : he assigns to the same year of 1250 the creation of the Captain of the people and that of the Podestà, and merely styles them two foreign

judges for civil and criminal cases. In fact, only the Captain of the people was created in that year as the defender of the popular interests in opposition to the Podestà, who was of older origin, was of gentle blood, and who took the side of the nobility. And both officers were more than mere judges; they had likewise political and military functions; they were assisted by two Councils; in the camp they commanded the armies of the people and the Commune. And just to mass everything together, Machiavelli attributes to the same year the institution of the Florentine Carroccio, which dates from a much earlier period.*

By this constitution, continues Machiavelli, liberty was established, the people armed, and the Republic extended its territories.† But the rise of Manfred, after the death of Frederic II., restored the courage and strength of the Ghibellines, who rose in revolt, and

* We have treated this question in two articles published in the *Politecnico* of Milan: *Le prime origini e le prime istituzioni della repubblica fiorentina* (July 1866); *La Costituzione del Primo Popolo e delle Arti Maggiori* (December, 1866). In particular, see note at p. 676, vol. ii. of 1866.

† It seems that although Machiavelli now consulted Villani almost as his only authority, he still gave an occasional glance to Flavio Biondo. In fact, when speaking of the new constitution he says: "By these civil and military institutions the Florentines founded their freedom. Nor can it be imagined how much authority and power Florence acquired in a short space of time, and not only became the chief power in Tuscany, but was counted among the first cities of Italy, and would have risen to the highest grandeur, but for the affliction of frequent and ever new divisions." *Opere*, vol. i. p. 70. And Flavio Biondo, at p. 299 of his work, after describing the same reform, remarks: "Crevitque mirum in modum, sub ea libertate populi florentini, simul cum potentatu audacia, adeo ut finitimos Hetruriæ populos contraria sentientes, aut foederibus sibi coniungere, aut viribus domare coeperit."

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though at first defeated in the city, overcame the Guelphs at Montaperti (1260), returned in triumph and finally possessed themselves of the government, which was thus again wrested from the people and given up to the nobility. Until this moment the history of the Florentine factions had been chiefly dependent on the course of general events in Italy; but henceforward the influence of internal causes began to prevail, and Machiavelli was the first historian to notice this and to record the almost imperceptible beginning of a great transformation in Florentine society. The Ghibelline party was becoming more and more identified with the party of the feudal aristocracy; but was waning in strength and numbers before the rapid growth of the people that now went to swell the ranks of the Guelphs. The nobles, aware of the gravity of this fact, tried to effect a compromise; but this only hastened their downfall, and later on brought about a total change of parties in Florence. Accordingly, the Ghibellines, although still masters of the government, tried to win popular favour, by furthering the formation of the Greater and Lesser Guilds. But this was not sufficient. The Emperor's absence, the great diminution of his power in Italy, and the triumph of the Angevins in Naples, finally had the effect of throwing the city entirely into the hands of the working classes, who placed the Priors of the Guilds at the head of the government in 1282. Villani, who had failed to grasp the true significance and value of the new magistrature, merely remarks that its title was derived from the gospel, where Christ exhorts the

apostles, saying : *Vos estis priores*. But Machiavelli, who looked to the root of the matter, without discussing the origin of its name, makes instead the following just observation : "This magistrature was the cause, as was "presently perceived, of the downfall of the nobles, since "on various pretexts they were kept excluded from it "by the people, and then mercilessly oppressed." *

After dismissing the battle of Campaldino (1289), like that of Montaperti, in two or three words, Machiavelli passes on to the successive internal revolutions brought to a climax by the events of 1293, that were in fact their logical consequence. The Ghibellines were then so thoroughly crushed by the people, that they had almost entirely disappeared. "Nevertheless, all the bad blood found to be seething in every city between the great ones who seek to rule, and the people, that wishes to live according to the laws, was still very heated. The new factions did not come to light so long as the Ghibellines excited alarm ; but directly the latter were conquered the former instantly began to assert their strength. No day passed without some injury done to a man of the people ; and the laws were insufficient to avenge him, for the *Grandi*, with the aid of kinsfolk and friends, resisted the authority of the Priors and the Captain." † Thus evil passions went on increasing until Giano della Bella achieved the establishment of the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia* (1293), by which even the *Grandi* were excluded from the Signory and overthrown. "After which the people triumphed completely, and the

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 78.

† *Ibidem*, vol. i. p. 79.

city became very prosperous, being full of men of wealth and reputation."*

We see, then, that the Ghibellines rose to power with the aid of the Empire, but were afterwards defeated by the Guelphs, who then splitting into *Grandi* and *popolani*, the latter faction overcame and destroyed the first. The whole of this period of Florentine history is a slow but unceasing progression towards the final triumph of democracy.

But this triumph by no means put a stop to dissensions; on the contrary, it marked the commencement of a transitional phase of party leaders, personal rivalries and fresh intestine quarrels, leading to the tyranny of the Duke of Athens. This was really a most remarkable episode of Florentine history, and is treated by Machiavelli at such length and with so much care, as to be altogether the principal theme of the second book of his *Storie*. He first describes to us the ambitious temper of Corso Donati, the disturber of the Republic; then the wars against Uguccone della Faggiuola and Castruccio Castracani, of which he gives a far more faithful narrative than in his fantastic *Vita di Castruccio*; and finally dwells minutely on the coming of the Duke of Athens (1342), when summoned by the Florentines to rule over them and be their commander in the campaign they had undertaken against the Tuscan Ghibellines. Owing to their incessant disputes, the citizens had come to such a point that "they were unable to preserve liberty, and could not tolerate slavery." The

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 84.

Duke immediately became an armed tyrant, a new *Prince*, and, as was only natural, Machiavelli gives a minute description of him, and an eloquent and dramatic version of the well-known tale. He takes his facts from Villani, but adds considerations, descriptions and speeches of his own, and by the increased force and impressiveness of his style, we are speedily made aware that he has lighted upon a sympathetic theme. Indeed, he even forgets the limits that should have been imposed upon him by the general proportions of his work, and lets himself be carried away by his propensity to indulge in reflections, invent speeches, and recount episodes which vastly enhance the attractions of the great historico-political picture that he places before his readers.

At the moment when the Duke is at last firmly established as master of the city, and it is plain that he intends to become an absolute tyrant, by obtaining the popular support, Machiavelli brings the Signory before him and puts a very singular and eloquent speech in their mouths: "You seek," they say to the Duke, "to enslave a city that has always lived in freedom. . . . "Have you considered all that this implies to such a city, "how mighty is the name of liberty, a name that no "force can overcome, no time consume, no merit counter- "balance? . . . In the midst of universal hatred no safety "is possible, for you cannot know whence the danger "may come, and he who fears all men can feel assured "of none. And if you should seek to do so, you plunge "into deeper perils, because then the hatred of others "burns yet more fiercely and they are better prepared

"for revenge. That time cannot consume the thirst for
"liberty is most certain, since it frequently occurs that
"in a city this thirst is felt by those who have never
"tasted liberty, and only hold it dear for the memory
"of it bequeathed to them by their fathers. . . . And
"even where their fathers have not reminded them of it,
"the public buildings, the palaces of the magistrates,
"the signs and tokens of free institutions, recall it to
"their minds, the which things are known and greatly
"prized by the citizens. What deeds of yours, think
"you, can outweigh the sweets of freedom, or make
"men cease to yearn after the present condition of
"things? Not if you could subject the whole of Tuscany
"to this government, and return to this city every day
"from triumphant conflict with our foes; forasmuch as
"all such glory would not be the city's but yours, and the
"citizens would not gain subjects, but fellow-slaves, by
"whose means they would be plunged more deeply in
"slavery. And however holy might be your life, how-
"ever benignant your manners, righteous your judg-
"ments, all this could not suffice to make you beloved.
"And if you deemed they could suffice, you would be
"deluded, for to one accustomed to live unshackled,
"every chain is heavy and every bond galls."* This is
how the Signory warn the Duke that his desire to
establish a tyranny is urging him to certain destruction.

As is well known, Machiavelli was not the first to
interpolate long speeches into historical writing. In
imitation of the ancients, the Humanists had for some

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 118-120.

time adopted, and often abused, this practice. But the historians of old remained both eloquent and truthful, while giving us wholly imaginary discourses, for they made the Greeks and Romans speak in accordance with their genuine modes of thought. The Humanists, on the contrary, by their endeavour to make Italians of the Middle Ages and the fifteenth century converse like Romans, achieved nothing beyond paltry displays of rhetoric. The same defect is also to be found in many historians of the Cinquecento.

Nevertheless, the discourses of Guicciardini and Machiavelli demand a different estimate. The former sometimes puts into the mouths of his personages words that were really uttered by them ; more frequently, however, he makes them explain the real causes, bearings and consequences of the actual facts. And accordingly his speeches have a great and positive value, although not always free from rhetorical flourish. On the other hand, Machiavelli's speakers, although equally fictitious, exhibit the author's own feelings and reflections with regard to historical events, and are therefore always profound, always most eloquent, although when we remember the supposed speakers, we are struck by the amount of anachronism and improbability. Who could believe, for instance, that the Florentine Signory would have ventured to show so bold a front in addressing the soldier Duke who was already lord of their city, or to manifest so profound a love of liberty ? Yet their speech is extremely eloquent, because it expresses all that the circumstances suggested and inspired to Machiavelli,

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who, being kindled by his own narrative, is himself the actual orator, and speaks with profound earnestness.

After this, and following Villani's lead, he continues the tale of the Duke's tyranny ; of the hatred it aroused in the people ; of the three conspiracies simultaneously woven by three different classes of citizens, and at last gives a most lively description of the fierce outbreak of the popular fury, which first drove away the tyrant, and then vented itself upon his trustiest followers and supporters, particularly on the *Conservator* Guglielmo d'Assisi and his youthful son aged eighteen years.*

"Enmities seem fiercer, wounds deeper, on the recovery of liberty than during its defence. Messer Guglielmo and his son were surrounded by thousands of their enemies, and the son had not yet completed his eighteenth year. Nevertheless, neither his youth, innocence, nor beauty availed to save him from the fury of the multitude ; and those who could not wound the victims while still breathing, stabbed them after they were dead, and, still unsatiated with tormenting them, slashed the corpses with their weapons, and tore them tooth and nail. And in order that every sense might be sated with vengeance, after having first listened to their groans, seen their wounds, touched their lacerated flesh, they proceeded to taste them, so that their own internal parts might be satisfied equally with their external organs."† Even these concluding particulars

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 121 and fol. ; Villani, *Cronica*, vol. iv. bk. xii. chaps. xv.-xviii.

† *Opere*, vol. i. p. 129.

are taken from Villani with very slight alterations ; but no one but Machiavelli could have discovered so excellent a style, especially in the expression of hatred for tyranny and love of liberty.

The Duke expelled, and his most trusted followers put to death, after other riots and tumults, the Decrees of Justice were once more enforced, and the nobles again totally excluded from the government, which returned into the hands of the people. And the nobles were now so completely crushed, that they tried, by changing their names, to be confused with the people, against whom they no longer dared to take arms, " and, indeed, " became continually meeker and more abject. Whereby " Florence was not only stripped of arms, but likewise " of all generosity." * Here it is worthy of note that Machiavelli, who so earnestly desired the triumph of democracy, and so greatly hated the aristocracy, nevertheless saw and frankly acknowledged that the latter's fall led to the decline of arms in the Italian Communes, which afterwards relied upon mercenary captains, who proved the ruin of the national liberty, independence, and strength, as will be shown in the following books.

Thus the second book of the *Istorie* has many gaps, many inaccuracies ; neglects all mention of the external affairs of the Republic, dwells with undue length upon certain interior events, while passing too lightly over others ; and being compiled from Villani's *Chronicle*, is entirely wanting in original research. Yet even putting aside its principal episode, that of the Duke of Athens,

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 137.

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recounted with such vigorous and splendid eloquence, this second book is still one of our masterpieces of historical literature. For in it Machiavelli, with eagle-like penetration, brings into unity the history of more than a hundred years. Events that, although clearly narrated, in Villani are disconnected and as if scattered at random over his pages ; the string of revolutions, of continual fresh disorders and new political institutions, which according to all the chroniclers, and even the historians, seem entirely at the mercy of chance, solely caused by brutal hatreds and ferocious passions, are here all marvelously brought into logical connection and for the first time converted into genuine history. For Machiavelli discerned that all these revolutions arose from the same cause, had a single aim, towards which they incessantly urged the Republic until it touched the predestined goal. It was a question of the sanguinary struggle between the people, in whose veins ran Latin blood, and the feudal aristocracy, which was of Germanic origin, and foreign to Italy. This struggle ended by the total destruction, first of the feudal lords, and then of the nobles known as the *Grandi*, that took place in 1293, and was still more effectually completed after the expulsion of the Duke of Athens. Thus, all the Florentine revolutions and institutions were not only connected together, but followed one another as if evolved from one and the same idea. In this way, through Machiavelli's critical analysis, this most confused and intricate history suddenly acquires the self-evidence of a geometrical proposition. The darkness has been dispersed by the electric light of his mighty

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intellect, and the most marvellous order introduced into the chaos bequeathed to us by the chroniclers. The whole secret of Florentine history is contained in this second book. And here it may be truly affirmed that no one has ever succeeded in doing better than he, and that the many writers who, even in after years, were unable to follow the course marked out by him, always missed their aim, and relapsed into disorder and confusion.

The third book goes from the year 1353 to 1414, and is compiled from three different authors. Down to 1378 Machiavelli uses the *Istoria Fiorentina* of Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, in the same way that he had used Villani, namely, by dwelling solely on passages relating to the internal struggles of the Republic and its political reforms. The special theme of this book is the exposition of the manner in which the multiplication of parties leads to the dissolution of the State, inasmuch as parties corrupt the city, and by the destroyal of liberty prepare the way for tyranny. Accordingly, the principal episode is that of the Revolt of the Ciompi (1378), when the popular excesses sowed the seed of the future power of the Medici, who for that very reason had been the secret helpers and fomenters of that great riot. Machiavelli relies, in his account, on the contemporary history of the event written by Gino Capponi. But, as this was incomplete, he is obliged towards the end to again revert to Marchionne di Coppo Stefani. Further on in this book, he also refers to other writers; but it is difficult to identify them all, because at this

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point the narrative proceeds very swiftly. He is most cautious in the choice of authorities ; his favourite authors are always the best and most trustworthy as regards the facts for which he refers to them. But this does not always prevent him from making a very arbitrary use of them, especially whenever he wishes to enforce any of his own pet ideas or political theories.

Every book of Machiavelli's history is prefaced by a few general reflections. In the first he starts with some brief remarks on the migrations and incursions of the Germanic tribes ; in the second he treats of the planting of colonies. The third and following books are prefaced by set introductions, each of which, in clear and precise terms, propounds some historico-political problem that is demonstrated in the subsequent narration. And these are precious, not only for their intrinsic value, but because they teach us how, to Machiavelli's eyes, history became transmuted into political science. We often see this science spring into life, as it were, under our gaze. "It is by natural enmities between the people and the nobility," so begins the third book, "that cities are divided and convulsed. Such enmities kept Rome and Florence divided, though in diverse fashion ; for whereas in Rome they were manifested by disputes, and were quieted by a law framed for the good of the public, in Florence, on the contrary, they began by combats, were exasperated by the banishment and execution of many citizens, and were ended by some decree conceived solely to the advantage of the victors. Roman dissensions, by bringing the people in closer contact with the nobles,

fostered military valour ; those of Florence extinguished it, by destroying the nobles. All this occurred because the Roman people only wished to share with the patricians in governing the affairs of the State ; but the people of Florence, on the contrary, wished to exclude the nobles in order to have the sole command. The desire of the former people was just, and the Roman patricians gave way ; the latter was unjust, and the Florentine nobility was obliged to resist. Thus there was fighting, banishment, bloodshed, and the laws were unjust, partial and cruel. The nobles were forced to change their names, armorial bearings and habits, and to mix with the people, so that the military valour and highmindedness appertaining to the aristocracy were extinguished, and could not be rekindled in the people who had it not ; consequently, Florence became more and more humiliated and abject.*

This comparison with Rome, also so frequently repeated in the *Discourses*, is undoubtedly somewhat strained. Machiavelli omits to notice that the Florentine aristocracy was feudal and of foreign origin, but not so the Roman ; he is guilty of considerable exaggeration when he says that in Rome the struggles between the people and patricians were always peaceful, and forgets that they led to an equality that later became the basis of Cæsarism. For in reality he establishes a comparison between the

* For the better comprehension of the whole of this introduction, of which several passages are somewhat obscure, it will be useful to compare it with the concluding portion of chap. ii. of bk. i. of Machiavelli's *Discourses*. *Opere*, vol. iii. pp. 18, 19.

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real history of Florence and a somewhat imaginary history of Rome, to which he attributes all the qualities that he would wish to discover in his political ideal. Nevertheless, all that he says of Florence is very true, and the result of keen observation, and his reflections with regard to the parallel drawn by him are also of much intrinsic value. They strangely resemble what has since been asserted by great modern writers, when comparing the political history of France with that of England. The English aristocracy, by joining with the middle class in the government of the country, gained a fresh increment of vigour and vitality; the French aristocracy, by separating itself entirely from the middle class and the people, obtained destruction at the hands of the triumphant democracy. England, therefore, made steady progress, had a strong, well regulated and liberal government; whereas France underwent continual revolutions, and attained to a great equality, in which all forms of government were possible and all were experimented. This is not very different from the views expressed by Machiavelli at the close of the introduction to his third book, where he says that: "Florence has reached such a stage, that a skilful legislator might easily mould it to any form of government." *

The Duke of Athens had roused the populace and utilized its support in order to establish his tyranny. Accordingly, after his expulsion, party struggles were complicated by the introduction of a new order of citizens forming a new element of discord. In fact,

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 141.

Florence was now the scene of perpetual conflict between the *popolo grasso*, or substantial traders of the Greater Guilds, the *popolo minuto*, or petty traders and artisans of the Lesser Guilds, and the populace. Arms having declined, all wars had to be carried on by the companies of adventure, who only fought for hire. In this condition of things the family of the Albizzi and other well-to-do burghers began to come to the front and gain influence in the city, no longer by force and violence, but by means of what were then called civil methods—*modi civili*—namely, by gaining possession of political offices, and by persecuting and banishing their adversaries as Ghibellines, although that party had ceased to exist.

There was great disorder, in short, and Machiavelli, for its better description and the more forcible rendering of his own general reflections on the causes and course of parties, and his grief at the spectacle of his country's decay, and the insecurity of liberty in Florence and the whole of Italy, brings some citizens before the Signory and makes them pronounce the following words: "The cities of Italy are teeming with all things capable of receiving or dealing corruption. The young are slothful, the old vicious, and either sex and every age is consumed by evil customs which good laws, being enfeebled by abuses, are powerless to cure. Consequently, decrees and laws are now made for private instead of public interests. Hence wars and treaties of peace and alliance are ordained, not for the common glory, but for the satisfaction of the few. And of all cities torn by similar divisions, our own city is certainly

"the worst. Wherefore it ensues that no sooner is this "faction expelled, and that division quelled, than another "arises ; for when a city seeks to maintain itself by "sects rather than by laws, no sooner has one sect "vanquished all opposition, than of necessity that sect "becomes divided against itself." "It was, for instance, believed that when the Ghibellines were destroyed, the Guelphs would long remain prosperous ; but, on the contrary, they split into the *Bianchi* and the *Neri*. The Bianchi being vanquished, fresh quarrels arose from the dissensions between the people and the aristocrats. And, thereupon, in order to give to others that which we did not know how to preserve for ourselves, we yielded our liberty now to King Robert, now to his brother, then to his son, and finally to the Duke of Athens. But, as we were never agreed either to live in freedom, or to exist in slavery, we drove away the Duke of Athens, whose sour and tyrannical soul had after all failed to give us wisdom, or to teach us how to live. For, in fact, we quarrelled among ourselves more than before, until the old nobility was conquered, and we had to be at the mercy of the people. It was thought that all cause of trouble would be ended now that a check had been imposed upon those who had divided the city by their overbearing pride. It has been seen, on the contrary, how fallacious are human hopes, for the haughtiness and ambition of the aristocrats were not extinguished, but passed on to the plebeians, who now, according to the fashion of the ambitious, seek to obtain the first rank in the Republic, and revive the terms of Guelph and

Ghibelline that had been previously abolished. Seek, therefore, to destroy the evil that sickens us, the rage that consumes us, the poison that destroys us, by curbing the ambition of those men, annulling the decrees that foster division, and promulgating such as are favourable to true freedom and civil order." *

The Signory then elected fifty-six citizens to reform the Republic ; but they only succeeded in heightening the confusion, because, as Machiavelli had already frequently said, and now repeated, "the mass of men "are better fitted to preserve a good government, than "to discover one for themselves." † Accordingly the Albizzi became more powerful than before, and when Pope Gregory XI. at Avignon declared war against Florence, they assumed the lead of the *popolo grasso*, made all necessary arrangements for the defence, and conducted the campaign with so much energy, that not only were the forces of the Pope repulsed, but the subject cities in his own States were excited to rise in the name of liberty. And the Eight of War, although they had disregarded interdicts, despoiled the churches of their wealth, and compelled the clergy to celebrate the rites of religion, enjoyed the full favour of the people, and were styled the Eight Saints, "so much "higher being then the esteem of those citizens for "their country than for their soul." ‡

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 146-151.

† *Ibidem*, vol. i. p. 151.

‡ *Ibidem*, vol. i. p. 153. We have already noted that this expression, also quoted on another occasion by Guicciardini, was first used by Neri di Gino Capponi. The term of "*Otto Santi*" is not to be found in Stefani,

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The acquisition of power on the part of the Albizzi and the "fat burghers" was caused by the fact that the wealthy merchants at the head of the vast trade and commerce of Florence, were the only persons interested in carrying on the external wars of the Republic. For in this way they could increase the power of the State while guarding the freedom of traffic, by which they accumulated their own riches and those of their city. Accordingly, they were always willing to make all needful sacrifices. They heaped taxes upon themselves as well as upon others, nor were they over scrupulous, on emergency, as to restricting the public liberties. The lesser arts, on the contrary, who earned their bread by petty industries, and petty internal traffic, were eager for peace and for the public luxury, that was indispensable to their prosperity; they desired fewer taxes, greater privileges, and at least some share in the management of State affairs. Consequently, it was always seen that the *popolo grasso* triumphed in time of war, and the *popolo minuto* in time of peace. And thus, directly the war against the Pope was ended, there were

but is, however, repeated by Nardi, *Storia*, vol. i. p. 7. Down to this portion of the second book, Machiavelli follows the *Istorie Fiorentine* of Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, published in the *Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani* of Padre Ildefonso di San Luigi, vol. vii. and fol. This history is divided in rubrics. To see how and to what extent Machiavelli made use of it, the following passages may be compared: Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 141, 142, and Stefani, rubric 662; Machiavelli, p. 143, and Stefani, rubric 665; Machiavelli, p. 144, and Stefani, rubrics 674 and 695; Machiavelli, p. 145, and Stefani, rubrics 725 and 726; Machiavelli, p. 151, and Stefani, rubric 732 (here Marchionne Stefani alludes to many reforms which Machiavelli leaves unmentioned); Machiavelli, p. 152, and Stefani, rubric 751; Machiavelli, p. 153, and Stefani, rubrics 751, 760, and 761.

complaints about the expenses incurred, the burdens imposed. Therefore the Albizzi lost favour ; the *popolo minuto* on the other hand gained ground, and began to seek for leaders. One of much skill was speedily discovered in Salvestro de' Medici, who, although belonging to the richer class, became from that moment the champion of the interests of the *popolo minuto*, and thus with infinite sagacity began to prepare the way for the supremacy of his own family. Machiavelli was the first historian to date the origin of the Medicean rule from this remote moment, and to clearly define the character of their very astute and fortunate policy.

On being chosen Gonfalonier in 1378, Salvestro opposed the Albizzi, favoured their enemies and the *popolo minuto*, and enforced the Decrees of Justice that had lapsed into disuse. But it was impossible to effect all this without riots, and without these riots giving rise to unexpected consequences. "Let no one," says Machiavelli at this point, "believe that he can make a change in a city, and then check it at his own pleasure, or regulate it after his own conceit." * This measure, in fact, proved the beginning of the revolt of the Ciompi, which serves to fill a great part of the third book, and which Machiavelli relates at length, with the aid of Capponi, and the addition of numerous speeches and reflections of his own.† The people and the populace,

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 158.

† *Tumulto dei Ciompi scritto da Gino Capponi*, published in the *Cronache antiche di varii scrittori*. Florence, Domenico Maria Manni, 1733 (from p. 219 to 249, of the volume). It is useful to compare Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 156 and 157, with Capponi, p. 220 ; Machiavelli, p. 158,

having won the first concessions, began to be turbulent, make riots, and to continually press fresh demands upon the Signory. No sooner were these granted, than others were urged of a more exorbitant nature, and at last they began to pillage and burn the citizens' houses. Upon this the Gonfalonier Luigi Guicciardini called together the heads of the Guilds and said to them: "We have yielded to your every demand. The magistrate's authority has been lessened; new curbs put upon the nobles; we have sent many powerful citizens into banishment, we have pardoned those who burnt houses, and pillaged churches. Where will your demands end? Do you not see that we show more patience in defeat, than you in victory? What will result to your city from all your divisions?" *

And after making the Gonfalonier speak in this wise, Machiavelli puts in the mouth of a man of the people another speech, recalling here and there the language of Catiline in Sallust, and painting with singular eloquence the fierce passions of the unbridled Florentine mob. It shows the strange mixture of heathenism and Christianity that is peculiar to the Renaissance. "If we had

and Capponi, p. 221; Machiavelli, p. 159, and Capponi, pp. 221, 223, and 225; Machiavelli, p. 160, and Capponi, pp. 223 and 224; Machiavelli, p. 160, and Capponi, p. 233; Machiavelli, p. 170, and Capponi, pp. 234-236, and 238; Machiavelli, p. 171, and Capponi, pp. 237, 239, and 240; Machiavelli, p. 172, and Capponi, p. 243; Machiavelli, p. 173, and Capponi, pp. 244 and 245; Machiavelli, p. 174, and Capponi, p. 246; Machiavelli, p. 175, and Capponi, p. 246. Capponi's work terminates at the Gonfaloniership of Michele di Lando, so at that point Machiavelli reverts to Marchionne di Coppo Stefani. *Vide* Machiavelli, p. 177, and Stefani, rubric 804; Machiavelli, pp. 178 and 179, and Stefani, rubric 805.

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 161-163.

now to decide whether we ought to take arms and burn and sack the citizens' houses, perhaps I, too, would rather vote for quiet poverty than perilous gain. But seeing that we are already in arms, and that much mischief has been already done, we must now remain sword in hand, and secure some advantage from the harm committed. If nothing else can teach us, necessity gives us a lesson. The city is full of hatred against us, and new weapons are being forged to strike us. And the sole way to gain forgiveness for our old sins, is by committing others, redoubling our burnings and robberies, and seeking many accomplices in them," "because when many sin, no one "is chastised ; and small faults are punished, but great "and grave ones rewarded. And when many suffer, few "seek vengeance, for universal injuries are endured with "more patience than private woes. Therefore, by multiplying our crimes, it will be all the easier to obtain "pardon. . . . It is grievous to me to hear that many of "you repent in your souls of the deeds you have done, "and mean to abstain from committing any more. For "if that be true, you are certainly not the men I believed "you to be, for neither conscience nor infamy ought to "have any terror for you ; since those who conquer, no "matter in what way, need never take shame of their "victory. And as for conscience, that should not trouble "us much, for in us who know what it is to dread hunger "and imprisonment, there neither can nor should be "room for fear of hell." *

And now, in the midst of the riot, Machiavelli beholds

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 165-167.

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the fantastic figure of Michele di Lando, who half naked and barefooted mounted the palace stairs with the mob at his heels, and was proclaimed Gonfalonier by the voice of the people. Then to show us that this proletary, whom his imagination exalted, was "sagacious and "prudent, and more indebted to nature than to fortune," he gives us an anecdote mainly of his own invention. Accordingly he says that Michele di Lando, finding himself exalted by a populace intoxicated with victory and panting for blood, determined to find a way of dominating it, and preventing the commission of greater excesses. He therefore ordered the arrest of Ser Nuto, who was held in great detestation, and had been destined by the adversaries of the people to fill the office of Bargello. All his companions immediately rushed off, heated with rage, to hunt for Ser Nuto, and Michele profited by the opportunity. To inaugurate by justice the rule he had acquired by fortune, not only did he prohibit all further burning of houses, but set up a gallows in the Piazza, to show that his threats would be enforced. Meanwhile the crowd came back, dragging Ser Nuto, who was "hung "from that gallows by one foot, and some one standing "near having knocked a bit off him, all of a sudden there "was nothing left of him excepting that foot." According to Machiavelli Michele di Lando had given no direct orders for the murder of Ser Nuto, because it was not necessary to do so. His object in choosing as a victim one so detested that no one would wish or be able to save him, was to satiate by this means the popular fury. In fact he thus succeeded in saving the life and

property of many citizens, and speedily re-established order and justice.*

Unfortunately none of this is corroborated by history. There is no mention of the killing of Ser Nuto in Capponi's *Tumulto de' Ciompi*, for the narrative ceases before that point; but it is recorded by other historians, to whom Machiavelli now refers,† and attributed by all to a fierce and unpremeditated burst of popular fury, without any suggestion that Michele di Lando was in the least responsible for it. The murder was an actual fact, and it would also seem that the public fury really subsided after its accomplishment. But the orders given by Michele to the people, and his purpose in giving them, are mentioned by no one but Machiavelli, and are certainly fictions of his own. He was so profoundly persuaded that any man capable of rising to great prominence in revolutions or politics, must necessarily have a drop of Cæsar Borgia's blood in his veins that he discovered it where it had no existence. He tried to convert the plain wool-carder who won a brief popularity, and who, though really doing more good than harm, had no elements of greatness, into a far-sighted politician, a noble character. And he accorded him unbounded admiration, because he regarded him as a defender of popular rights who

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 173, 174.

† Marchionne di Coppo Stefani mentions it at rubric 795 and Aretino at the beginning of book ix. For further details of the *Tumulto de' Ciompi*, *vide* the interesting work with that title published by Prof. Carlo Fossati in vol. i. of the *Pubblicazioni del R. Istituto di Studi Superiori in Firenze* (Section of Philosophy and Philology), Florence, Le Monnier. In chap. iv. § iii. the author narrates the fate of Ser Nuto, according to authentic accounts edited and inedited, and arrives at the same conclusion as ourselves.

never attempted to turn his personal success to account by establishing a tyranny. And having once begun to paint the man's portrait, he tried to enhance its attractions by colouring it from his own imagination, which was often too ready to behold a Borgia everywhere.

Machiavelli carries on his narrative to the end in the same enthusiastic strain. When the mob proceeded to further excesses, and neither reasoning nor menace availed to restrain it, Michele rushed through the city, sword in hand, with a numerous following of armed men, and quelled the rebels by force. So at last the riots were stopped solely by the valour of the Gonfalonier, who in courage, prudence, and goodness, surpassed every citizen of that period, and deserved to be numbered among the few who have benefited their country, for his goodness forbade him to conceive any thought that was contrary to the public welfare." *

In actual truth Michele di Lando was not only a far less significant personage, but was often an involuntary and unwitting instrument in the hands of Salvestro, and in no case could have been able to aspire to absolute rule.†

Machiavelli now falls back upon Marchionne Stefani,‡ and then presently availing himself of Aretino§ and

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 177, 178.

† See what is said of him on this subject by Fossati, in the above quoted work.

‡ We have already quoted the rubrics in question.

§ *Vide* Machiavelli, p. 180, and Aretino (Italian edition), p. 478; Machiavelli, p. 182, and Aretino, pp. 484, 489, and 490; Machiavelli, p. 183, and Aretino, p. 490; Machiavelli, p. 184, and Aretino, p. 491; Machiavelli, p. 186, and Aretino, p. 491; Machiavelli, pp. 188, 189, and Aretino,

others, carries his narrative forward to 1414. First of all, he investigates the earliest political results of the revolt, consisting in a reaction against the excessive power of the populace, which was then expelled from the government, and in another triumph of the Trades, in which, however, the Lesser prevailed over the Greater Guilds. The enemies of the Albizzi now took the ascendant, namely, men like Giorgio Scali, and above all Salvestro de' Medici, who after secretly fomenting and manipulating the revolt, then profited by the reaction that was setting in no less to the injury of the populace than of the greater guilds. He, and not Michele di Lando, had played the astute politician, and his descendants reaped the harvest of this revolution. Machiavelli was the first historian to take account of this fact; but he could not admire a policy of mere subterfuge, and devoid of daring, which, while feigning to support the rights of the people, solely aimed at the destroyal of liberty. Consequently he extolled and idealized the modest and hardy wool-carder, who never thought of abusing his success.

But when the long war began between the Florentines and Giovan Galeazzo Visconti, Count of Virtù, who was lord of Milan and sought to become master of the whole of Italy, the government of Florence again passed into the hands of the Greater Guilds and the Albizzi, who, as usual, conducted the war with admirable energy and patriotism.* But they were once more compelled to

p. 506; Machiavelli, p. 192, and Aretino, p. 556. Here, too, Machiavelli occasionally makes use of other historians, and alludes to it himself at p. 193.

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 191.

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augment taxation, and to keep down the lowest classes, whose discontent was proportionately great. Hence, no sooner was danger at an end and peace at hand, than the masses rebelled and turned to Messer Vieri de' Medici, who had succeeded to Salvestro, was now the practical head of the city, and who also pursued the same policy of expectancy.

The fourth book describes the manner in which the Medici at last contrived to touch the much desired goal. It starts from the year 1420, thus passing over several years, and goes down to the triumph of Cosimo de' Medici, on his return from exile in 1434. The fact of few noteworthy events having occurred during the intervening years is not the sole reason for this leap. Machiavelli now makes frequent use of a new authority, the *Istorie Fiorentine* of Giovanni Cavalcanti, which begin precisely from 1420.* Its want of literary value long

* The *Istorie* were intended to go on to 1450, but really broke off in 1440. In another and later work designated by the editor as the *Seconda Storia*, Cavalcanti related the events that took place between 1440 and 1447. He was a credulous and fantastic man, with a craze for Platonic philosophy, had little talent, and was a bad writer. He was a great admirer of Cosimo de' Medici, although he sometimes blamed him. The *Istorie Fiorentine* were written during the imprisonment he suffered for omitting to pay his taxes. The work was published by Filippo Polidori in two volumes, with documents in the appendix. Florence, The Dante Press, 1838 and 1839.

In the *Historische Schriften* of Gervinus, the author after comparing the manuscript histories of Cavalcanti with the printed ones of Machiavelli, censured the Italians for having neglected to publish the former, while wasting their time in the study and publication of literary manuscripts from which they gained nothing but words and phrases for the Cruscan Academy. The reproof was not altogether undeserved, but the German historian might have noted many things on which he was silent. As he had been in Florence, and brought out his work in 1833 in Germany, he should have re-

condemned this work to oblivion ; nevertheless, as a contemporary narrative, it was held to be and really is a trustworthy guide. Accordingly, Machiavelli frequently availed himself of it and to a far greater extent than of any other of his authorities. Sometimes, merely changing the style, he copies him outright.

The Medici now make their first appearance as powerful personages, and Machiavelli shows a desire to turn from the internal affairs of Florence, and dwell instead upon the external wars that he had hitherto neglected. However, in this fourth book he does not enlarge much upon these ; only indeed mentions them in order to speak ill of the mercenary leaders, note the influence of the

membered that long before he had done so, Canon Domenico Moreni, in a *Lettera bibliografica* addressed to Canon Carlo Ciocchi (Florence, Ciardetti, 1803, at pages 12 and 13), had recommended the publication of Cavalcanti's *Istorie*, spoke of them afterwards in his *Bibliografia storico-ragionata della Toscana*, and brought out their more important parts in an octavo volume entitled : *Della carcere, dell' ingiusto esilio e del trionfale ritorno di Cosimo Padre della Patria, tratto dalla Istoria fiorentina manoscritta di Giovanni Cavalcanti*. Florence, Magheri, 1821. And in the preface to this work (pp. xxvii., xxviii.), Moreni even then remarked what Gervinus thought himself the first to discover : " Although, as we have seen, this history is "very defective in its diction, no one has as yet noticed that it served as a "guide and authority to Machiavelli for his own history. And this can be "easily verified by any one, who may wish to do so, without it being "necessary for us to cite any passage or example in support of our assertion."

The *Seconda Storia*, narrating the events from 1440 to 1447, is of less importance and worse written. Polidori published the greater part of it in the shape of an additional volume. In the appendix he also added some fragments of another work by Cavalcanti, a treatise on politics, or rather on morals, which is quite valueless. The *Seconda Storia* was written out of prison, as the author tells us at the beginning. But after all it is only fair to add that Gervinus's reproofs had some share in promoting the publication in Florence of a good and complete edition of Cavalcanti's *Histories*.

wars upon the factions within the walls of Florence, and the infinite cleverness with which the Medici contrived to turn even the wars to account. He borrows Cavalcanti's description of certain of these campaigns, and gives it a colouring of his own ; but he passes many of them over in silence, in order to follow his author much more closely in the narrative given of city events. Cavalcanti often indulges in original reflections, expressed in endless speeches, the supposed utterances of his characters. These speeches are high-flown, turgid and altogether painful reading, but have the merit of containing reasonings really enunciated in Florence with reference to the events that happened from day to day. Machiavelli therefore had no scruple as to imitating or copying them in his history ; and these bursts of see-saw rhetoric are converted into genuine eloquence by the magic of his pen, just as the lengthy, monotonous narratives of the earlier writer become rapid, forcible and most vivacious in the hands of his successor. And as to this is added the logical connection of events that is always lacking in Cavalcanti, it is easy to understand why this fourth book of the *Histories* should have a special and considerable value of its own, although it comprises continual plagiarisms such as can only be realized by those who have collated the two authors. And such comparison will likewise show the ease with which a man of genius can change the worst written pages into excellent literary work.

After a brief introduction on the perils incurred by liberty where no good laws place a curb on the excesses

of the nobles tending to oppression, or on those of the people tending to licence, Machiavelli observes that the ancients indeed had good laws, but not the Italian republics, and that consequently the latter always ended by requiring the despotic rule of some single individual. "There has been a manifest example of this in Florence, where the parties called into existence by the dissensions of the Albizzi, and the Ricci, and so scandalously resuscitated by Messer Salvestro de' Medici, were never extinguished. The deserts of the Albizzi with regard to their country were certainly great; but that family soon became insolent, and were torn by envy one of the other, the which afforded the Medici an opportunity for gradually re-establishing their own authority over the people. Thus, at last, to the great joy of the masses, Giovanni obtained the post of first magistrate. And it was in vain that men wiser than the rest, more especially Niccolò da Uzzano, raised a warning cry that this would prove the beginning of a tyranny."*

We are then quickly brought to the war against Filippo Maria Visconti, who aspired to the domination of all Italy. And the Albizzi were again at the head of the government, and again showed great energy in the conduct of the war, which, however, was ended in 1424, by the rout of Zagonara.† Cavalcanti says that the battle "was tremendous and mortal at the beginning," but that through the unskilfulness of their captains, the Florentines were surrounded and put to flight. The

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 203-206.

† Vide *Ibidem*, vol. i. pp. 206 and 209; Cavalcanti, *Storie*, vol. i. p. 6.

commander-in-chief was made prisoner ; Lodovico degli Obizzi, one of the captains, was killed ; a third was drowned.* Furthermore the enemy stripped 3200 knights of their arms.† All this would lead to the belief that at least several soldiers as well as captains were killed. But Machiavelli, even with Cavalcanti's pages before him, is eager to take the first opportunity to express his contempt for mercenary arms, and without mentioning that any resistance was made, hastily concludes by saying that "in the tremendous defeat that "was noised throughout Italy, no one perished excepting "Lodovico degli Obizzi and two of his men, who being "thrown from their horses, were smothered in the mud."‡ We shall see that he always repeats the same assertion with regard to other campaigns in which there was much harder fighting, and the number of the fallen was more accurately known.

The immediate result of the rout of Zagonara was the overthrow of the Greater Guilds and the Albizzi in Florence. All the squares rang with execrations against their ambition. "Now have they created the Ten in "order to strike terror into their enemies! Now have "they succoured Forlì and wrested it from the hands of "the Duke! Now at last their counsels are betrayed, "and we see at what end they were aiming : they were "labouring, not to defend liberty, which is hostile to "them, but to increase their own power, which God has "justly diminished. Nor is this the only enterprise with

* Cavalcanti, *Istorie Fiorentine*, vol. i. pp. 59-64.

† Ammirato, *Storie*, bk. xviii. at conclusion.

‡ *Opere*, vol. i. p. 214.

"which they have burdened the city, for there have been many others, and that against King Ladislaus was very like this last. To whom can they now turn for aid? To Pope Martin, who has seen them inflict torture upon Braccio? To Queen Joan, who through their desertion was forced to cast herself into the arms of the King of Aragon?" *

Who could believe that this speech is based upon that previously written by Cavalcanti? Yet so it is.† Twenty citizens were elected for the imposition of fresh taxes, and they naturally threw the chief burden upon the *popolani grassi*. Accordingly the latter held a meeting in Santo Stefano, when Rinaldo degli Albizzi made them a speech, which Cavalcanti has spread over fifteen

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 211, 212.

† Here is the discourse as it stands in Cavalcanti: "Satiare yourselves then, ye voracious wolves, who would have burst before this had this city been allowed a little rest. You are always exciting fresh wars, unnecessary risks and abominable abuses. You even began the war against the king, reckless both of his rights and of the benefits received from his predecessors. Now take your fill of us, feed yourselves upon our miserable flesh; you have left no other sustenance to ourselves and our families. You always seek quarrels, yet see how you manage your wars. . . . To whom will you have recourse? What help can save you from the strength of your enemies? With what weapons will you defend your ungrateful arrogance? There are no longer sovereigns of Apulia, there is only Madonna Giovannella, whom you have forced into subjection to a barbarous people, by not silencing a vile adventurer. Who now will aid you? Pope Martin whom you so shamelessly allowed to be so insulted by your sons? Do you not know that their songs ran thus: *Papa Martino non vale un quattrino*, and: *Braccio valente che vince ogni gente*? You never thought to have need of any man's help. It is written that once a lion had need of a mouse. Whither will you fly for safety? Now make your wars, and create the Ten, and say that they inspire fear to the enemy: now carry out all your foolish, ill-considered, motiveless plans, etc."—Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. ii. chap. xxi. p. 65-67.

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pages, drowning its propositions in a sea of words, but which Machiavelli has summarized in a few graphic sentences. Albizzi declared that it was necessary to restore the government to the *grandi*, and diminish the influence of the Lesser Guilds by reducing them from fourteen to seven.* Other speeches followed, and are given by Machiavelli, who still copies them from Cavalcanti. Finally Albizzi was commissioned to win over Giovanni de' Medici to their party; but he refused, alleging that he disliked innovations, and was a friend of the people,† the which gained him a great increase of favour in the city. Cavalcanti then devotes five-and-twenty chapters to the external wars that re-established the strength of the Albizzi; but these are left aside by Machiavelli, who merely gives one or two anecdotes concerning them.

After peace was made, dissensions broke out again as usual, and Giovanni de' Medici promoted the law of Catasto, which by indicating the method of levying taxes according to the ascertained amount of revenue, and no longer by arbitrary caprice, was opposed by the *popolo grasso*, favoured by the *popolo minuto*, and finally carried by the help of Giovanni,‡ who died shortly after (1429).

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 215. As another specimen of Cavalcanti's style, we subjoin the first sentence of his speech: "Great is my rejoicing and greater my comfort, respected soldiers and respectable citizens, to see you in this temple, forming so magnificent a circle about me, and all gazing attentively upon me, for the purpose of augmenting the welfare and honour of our republic." Cavalcanti, *Storie fiorentine*, vol. i. bk. iii. p. 74. The discourse continues to p. 90, and always in the same style.

† *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 215-217; Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. iii. chaps. iii. and v.

‡ *Opere*, vol. i. p. 224; Cavalcanti, bk. iv. chaps. viii. and ix.; bk. v. chap. i.

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The description of his death, his exhortation to his children, and even the eulogy upon him, are all taken from the same source, all improved by the same skilful touch.* Machiavelli then passing rapidly over other events, comes to the war against Lucca, which was again of assistance to the Medici. Having been proclaimed at the instance of Astorre Gianni and Rinaldo degli Albizzi, who were appointed commissaries of war to the camp, it brought about their ruin. Astorre Gianni perpetrated great cruelties at Serravezza, although that town had freely surrendered. Accordingly, a few of its inhabitants brought complaints to Florence, saying: "This Commissary of yours has nothing human save his aspect, nothing Florentine save his name; he is a deadly pest, a savage beast, a horrible monster such as was never described by any writer."† Thereupon Astorre was recalled, and Albizzi being greatly enraged by being accused of embezzlement with regard to the victualling

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 225; Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. v. chaps. iii.-v. This is how Cavalcanti begins his account of the death of Giovanni de' Medici: "Two rats, one black and one white, having nibbled the roots of the fruit tree that had nourished that excellent citizen Giovanni de' Medici, its branches began to bend rapidly towards the hard earth. By this infirmity Giovanni knew that his life wished to reduce his wet and frigid humours to water, disperse his breath in the air, and render his body to the earth, and thus return his heat and dry parts to fire." Polidori thinks that the white and black rats signify day and night, namely, his past existence, or possibly even pleasure and pain.

† *Opere*, vol. i. p. 235. In Cavalcanti the speech is attributed to the Florence mob, instead of to the men of Serravezza, and begins thus: "We knew that no wolf ever gave birth to a lamb; and therefore we might have expected that a man descended from so shameful a stock would partake of the nature of his progenitors and be sanguinary, etc." Cavalcanti, bk. vi. chap. xi.

of the army and the spoils of war, forsook the camp and threw up his office.* After that the war went badly, and the Florentines were defeated near the river Serchio.

After a brief record of these military doings, which are minutely described by Cavalcanti, Machiavelli at last introduces on the scene Cosimo de' Medici, who had so patiently waited the opportunity that was now at hand. He describes him, praises his conduct, his singular prudence, and the very great liberality towards his friends, that proved so serviceable to the increase of his power. He had at first been in favour of the war against Lucca, but now that, under Albizzi's mismanagement, it had turned out badly, Cosimo held his tongue and allowed all the odium to fall upon the former. Barbadori had discovered his deceit, but failed to persuade Niccolò da Uzzano† to join the Albizzi and drive Cosimo de' Medici from the city. In the narration of this visit to Uzzano, based on details given by Cavalcanti, Machiavelli omits

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 236, 237; Cavalcanti, bk. vi. chaps. xiii. and xiv. According to Machiavelli the two commissaries were both at the camp at the same time, and this seems to have been the fact. But according to Cavalcanti, Albizzi was sent to take the place of Gianni. However, all that is alleged against the latter by Cavalcanti and copied by Machiavelli, may at least be said to be grossly exaggerated. *Vide* Gino Capponi, *Storia della Repubblica di Firenze*, vol. i. p. 496 and fol., and the *Commissioni* of Rinaldo degli Albizzi, published by the Deputazione di Storia Patria, in 3 vols., Florence, 1867, 1869, 1873.

† Machiavelli says, in speaking of this visit of Barbadori to Uzzano, that "he went to seek him in his own house where the latter dwelt in his study "absorbed in thought." *Opere*, vol. i. p. 244. Cavalcanti says that "Niccolò had withdrawn from human intercourse into the solitude of his "study, and the gravest confusions bewildered his mind. . . . He was "using his hand as a pillow for chin and cheek, etc." Vol. i. bk. vii. chap. vi. p. 380.

the speech of Barbadori, but copies, with the usual modifications, that of Uzzano, adding nothing but a few reflections of his own. "And it would be well for thee, for thy house, and for our Republic, that thou and all those of thy opinion should have beards of silver rather than gold, for then their advice, as proceeding from hoary and experienced heads, would be wiser and more useful to each one of you." * "Our party is styled by you the party of the nobles; but if that be so, I may remind you that in Florence the nobles were always vanquished by the people. And what is now worse, we are divided and our adversaries united.† And Cosimo has benefited the people in a thousand ways." "Accordingly you would have to give your reasons for expelling him, since he is pitiful, helpful, liberal, and beloved of all. Have the kindness to tell me what law prohibits or even blames and condemns piety, liberty, and love amongst men?‡ And although all these may be means to carry men flying to supreme power, nevertheless they are not so considered, and we cannot avail to make people understand it, because our

* *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 244-248. This is the opening of the speech according to Cavalcanti: "Niccolò, Niccolò Barbadori, would to God that thou couldst with reason be called Barba argenti! insomuch as it might signify that you were an aged veteran, in whom true judgment and excellent prudence might be found." Vol. i. bk. vii. chap. viii. p. 382.

† Here, likewise, Machiavelli imitates Cavalcanti, who writes: "we are not agreed either as to our mind or our intentions" (bk. vii. chap. viii. p. 383); and then he, too, alludes to the many Florentine dissensions, in which the nobles were always worsted.

‡ "What crime or what motives could be alleged against this man, so that the people should quietly submit to his undoing? etc." Cavalcanti, vol. i. p. 386.

"own ways have deprived us of belief." "Certainly, difficult as it would be to expel Cosimo, yet with the aid of a well-disposed Signory, it might be accomplished. Very soon, however, he would come back," "and all you "would have gained would be this, that he would have "been driven away a good man and restored to us a bad "one ; for his nature would be corrupted by those who "assisted to restore him, and whom he would be unable "to oppose on account of his obligations to them." * This, in fact, was precisely what occurred, and might easily have been foreseen by the sagacious. Therefore Machiavelli has been greatly praised for this concluding remark, which, as well as nearly all the rest of the speech, was borrowed from Cavalcanti.

Niccolò da Uzzano died, and Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Cosimo de' Medici remained in conflict, and with their respective adherents once more kept the city divided. "Whenever," writes Machiavelli, still borrowing from Cavalcanti, "a magistrate was about to be "elected, it was publicly declared how many were of "this, and how many of that party, and the whole city "was in a ferment every time the names of a new Sig-

* "He will go away entirely good, and return entirely different ; inas-
"much as he will necessarily be obliged to change his nature and habits, in
"consequence of the iniquity of his expulsion, which would overthrow every
"just method of political life. And less of his own fault than because he
"would be urged by the incitements of bad men ; inasmuch as he would
"go away a free man, and return under obligations to every member of the
"sect of *arrabbiati*, to whom, on account of the benefits received from
"them, in their recalling him to his country, he would be compelled, by
"force of gratitude, to promise and to bestow assistance in the accom-
"plishment of their iniquities." Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. vii. chap. viii. p. 386.

"nory were drawn. No case, however trifling, could "be brought before the magistrates without being "converted into a party struggle ; secrets were divulged ; "both good and evil went by favour ; honest men were "attacked as virulently as bad ; no magistrate fulfilled "his duty." * Again, when Bernardo Guadagni, one of Albizzi's friends, was about to be elected Gonfalonier, the latter, to prevent the annulling of the election, provided him with money for the taxes that he had not yet been able to pay,† and begged him to profit by his new position to obtain the expulsion of Cosimo de' Medici, whose power was still on the increase. Even in reporting this speech Machiavelli gives us a very faithful summary of the account to be found in Cavalcanti. "He reminded Guadagni that if Messer Salvestro de' Medici had been able to curb the greatness of the Guelphs, who were entitled to the government for which they had shed their blood, he (Guadagni) might justly do to one man that which had been unjustly done to so many.‡ He bade him fear nothing, since his friends would defend him by force, and Cosimo would gain no more from the mob that now seemed to adore him

* *Opere*, vol. i. p. 248. Cavalcanti says: "And directly any nomination had to be made to some principal office of the State, every "one in the city calculated how many there were of the one party, "how many of the other. . . . And no Signory could be elected, without "the whole city being in a turmoil, etc.," vol. i. p. 494. "And no case, "whether just or unjust, useful or hurtful, could be judged by any tribunal "without the two parties of the citizens struggling for the upper hand : "and it was in this way that our poor little city was governed." *Ibidem*, p. 495.

† *Opere*, vol. i. p. 248 ; Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. ix. chap. iii.

‡ The identical idea is to be found in Cavalcanti, vol. i. p. 503.

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than had Messer Giorgio Scali ; nor was there anything to be feared on the score of his wealth, since, on being seized by the Signory, his possessions likewise would fall into their hands. In short, this deed would ensure the safety and unity of the Republic, and confer glory on himself." *

From Cavalcanti, too, is derived the whole account of the imprisonment, exile, and triumphant return of Cosimo, not only as regards its general outline, but down to its minutest details and expressions.† There are many incidents in Cavalcanti that are not in Machiavelli, but there is hardly anything in the latter's work that is not to be found in the former's. The very words of reproof that, at the end of this book, Albizzi, being sentenced to exile, hurls against Pope Eugenius IV., are derived from the same source.‡ Machiavelli, however, always added

* And in Cavalcanti : " We will secretly provide ourselves with armed followers, advising thee that all veteran politicians are worshipping thee with clasped hands. They will carry arms hidden under their cloaks for the defence of justice." Vol. i. p. 504. " Be afraid of nothing, and less than all of the populace ; for every multitude is lost without a head." . . . Follow the example of Messer Giorgio Scali. *Ibidem*, p. 505. " Again, the riches will not remain in the pocket of him who would spend them ; inasmuch as they may be taken from him, as soon as you have him in your power. . . . Your glory will ring through the city : writers will heap glory and fame upon you." *Ibidem*, p. 506.

† *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 253-260 ; Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. ix. chaps. xxiii.-xxv., and xxviii. ; bk. x. chaps. i.-v., and xix.

‡ In Machiavelli (*Opere*, vol. i. p. 259), Albizzi says : " But I blame myself more than any other, since I held the belief that you, who had once been driven from your country, would have been able to keep me in mine." In Cavalcanti (vol. i. p. 608) the speech stands thus : " I heartily blame myself for trusting to the promises of one who has been unequal to helping himself, inasmuch as he who is impotent in his own cause will never be potent in that of another."

something of his own, not merely the marvellous style that wrought so magical a change, but the logical connection and profound intuition of events. It is only from his pages that we learn why times of war raised the Albizzi and the Greater Guilds to power, times of peace on the contrary the Lesser Guilds ; how the Medici were always lurking as it were in ambuscade behind these latter, currying favour with the lower classes, and always making a show of favouring them, in order to trample on them all afterwards. In this way he has transmuted Cavalcanti's diffuse and tedious narrative into a new and original history, revealing the secret arts of the Medici. For the earlier work is abominably ill-written ; the gravest events and most insignificant details are all treated alike in it, and being given one after the other, without any order or connection, are thus deprived of their special meaning and historical value. On this account it is highly useful to establish a comparison between the two works, and we have thought it a duty to devote much time and space to the task.

CHAPTER XIII.

The *Florentine Histories*—Books v. and vi., or the triumph of the Medici and the Italian wars—Books vii. and viii., or Lorenzo de' Medici and the conspiracies—The *Historical Fragments*—*Extracts from letters to the Ten of Balìa*—The rough sketch of the *Histories*.

THE four following books constitute the third and last part of the *Storie*, and are not very well arranged. Machiavelli should now have touched upon the despotism of the Medici, and the manner in which they wrought the destruction of liberty. But for him this was a theme that bristled with difficulties. Even while lauding their merits, he must have harshly censured their political conduct; and to do this with the requisite freedom was impossible for him in a work dedicated to Clement VII. On the 30th August, 1524, he wrote to Guicciardini: "I am in the country working at my history, and I would pay ten *soldi*—I will not say more—to be able to consult you; for I have come to a point upon which I should be thankful for your opinion, namely: Whether I give too much offence by my praise or my blame. Nevertheless, I shall do my best to speak the truth, without giving any one cause for complaint." * In the

* *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 165, letter liii.

fifth and sixth books he pauses to say a great deal of the Florentine, and, indeed, of the Italian wars in general, and expresses still stronger condemnation of the captains of adventure, in order to insist that they were the cause of Italy's ruin. From time to time he reverts to home events, for which he still uses Cavalcanti as an authority ; but soon quits them to resume the subject of the wars. And in their recital he sometimes refers to Flavio Biondo, at others to Gino Capponi and Simonetta, who had often been eye-witnesses of the battles in question.

After some allusions to his own well-known theories on the rise and decline of States, he remarks that in every human society military leaders and military deeds are the first to become famous, and next philosophy and letters. "Arms bring victory, victory quiet, nor can the strength of men's minds be more honestly corrupted than by means of letters. Italy likewise underwent these vicissitudes, being now happy, now miserable with the Etruscans and the Romans. And although, after the ruin of the Empire, nothing has been done towards her redemption, towards her performing glorious deeds under the rule of a virtuous prince ; and although she has never succeeded in achieving true unity ; nevertheless, she once had sufficient valour to resist the barbarians. Afterwards came times of peace without tranquillity, and war without peril. For princes and States often attacked one another ; but we cannot apply the name of wars to quarrels in which no men were killed, no cities sacked, no kingdoms destroyed. These affairs, in fact, began without alarm, were pursued without danger, completed

without injury. And thus military valour, extinguished elsewhere by long-enduring peace, was extinguished among us by wars of the above kind, as will be shown by what we shall have to say of the period between 1434 and 1494, when again barbarians were admitted, and again bound Italy in their chains." "And if in this account "of subsequent events in this lower world there will be "no tales to tell of the bravery of soldiers, the skill of "captains, or the devotion of citizens to their country ; "at least, we can relate by what frauds, by what wiles "and tricks, princes, soldiers, and heads of republics, contrived to maintain the reputation of which they were "unworthy." * This is the introduction to the fifth book.

Machiavelli then begins to speak of the two different schools of Italian arms, the one headed by Francesco Sforza, the other by Niccolò Fortebraccio and Niccolò Piccinini. He gives a hasty, incomplete, and far from exact account of their enterprises in the States of the Church after the year 1433,† and always with the single

* *Opere*, vol. ii. pp. 1-4.

† Machiavelli says that Sforza and Fortebraccio went to skirmish in the States of the Church on their own account, because they were unable to live without making war ; but the truth was, that they were sent there by the secret command of Filippo Maria Visconti. Machiavelli mentions among other matters (*Opere*, vol. ii. p. 5) a treaty of peace arranged between Sforza and Fortebraccio, by means of Visconti, who was never a peace-maker, but only a promoter of warfare. He adds that Sforza, by way of marking his contempt for the Pope, always dated his letters : *Ex Girifalco nostro firmiano, invitis Petro et Paulo* (*Opere*, vol. ii. p. 5). But I am not aware that these words exist in any document, nor are they recorded by other historians. Rubieri reasonably remarks, that even if employed by Sforza, it must have been at a later date than that supposed by Machiavelli ; because in the years 1433, 1435 Sforza had no cause for anger against the Pope. E. Rubieri, *Francesco Sforza, Narrazione storica*.

intent of proclaiming the evil nature of similar wars, the great ruin they brought upon liberty and Italy. He vents these opinions spasmodically, now hastily reverting to the internal affairs of Florence, and again putting them aside with equal haste.

Cosimo's triumphant return, and the persecutions that quickly ensued, inspire the author with certain remarks serving to reveal his true opinion concerning those events, and why he shrank from their narration. "Not only by party hatreds were the citizens injured at that time ; but wealth, family ties, and private enmities also wrought them harm. And if these proscriptions had been accompanied by bloodshed, they would have resembled those of Octavian and Scylla. As it was, some taint of blood rested on them, for Bernardo Guadagni and certain other citizens were beheaded."* The magistrates were not changed, but their functions were altered, and their political authority was lessened. Through the Balle means were found to provide that the result of the new elections should be favourable to the Medici ; for such was always the art of government practised by that family.† And this fifth book tells us little more of the internal history of Florence, and again recurs to the narrative of the principal Italian wars.‡

Florence, Le Monnier, 1879, two vols. Vol. i. p. 225, note 2 ; and p. 342, note 2.

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 8 ; Cavalcanti, bk. x. chaps. 21-25.

† *Ibidem*, vol. ii. p. 9 ; Cavalcanti, bk. x. chap. 20.

‡ We may here mention the authorities used by Machiavelli when writing of these wars. *Johannis Simonetæ, Historia de rebus gestis Francisci Frimi Sfortiæ vicecomitis Mediolanensium ducis*, published in Muratori's *Rerum italicarum Scriptores*, vol. xxi. Flavio Biondo's history, which is

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In fact he now shifts the scene from Florence to Naples; relates the death of Joan II., the coming of Alfonso of Aragon, and the war waged by that prince against the Genoese, who captured him and his two brothers, and gave them up to Filippo Maria Visconti, by whose orders they had fought. At this point Cavalcanti invents a strange and absurd harangue, supposed to be uttered by the Duke at the moment of giving his prisoners their release, and overwhelming them with rhetorical, inflated and empty compliments.* Machiavelli, on the contrary, assigns a speech to Alfonso of Aragon, who by skilful reasoning persuades the Duke to set him at liberty. I am not aware that this speech has any foundation on fact; but it contains the real motives that must, in Machiavelli's opinion, have decided the Duke to free his prisoners as he actually did. "It was more dangerous for the Duke than for any one else," so the king must have told him, "to allow the Angevins to triumph in Naples through the captivity of the Aragoneses. Milan would thus have the French both to north and south, and the Duke would be at their mercy. Hence no one could have a greater interest than himself in promoting the

the best authority, particularly as to the wars carried on in the States of the Church during this period. *Vide* Deca. iii. chaps. v. and vi. The *Commentarii di Neri di Gino Capponi* (1419-1456), in Muratori's *Rerum italicarum Scriptores*, vol. xviii. The *Cacciata del Conte di Poppi*, also by Capponi, in the same volume of Muratori.

* According to Cavalcanti, the Duke's speech began thus: "Oh most serene kings, oh most gentle lords, oh most illustrious knights, you are no captives, but rather the captors of our love, etc." Vol. ii. bk. ix. chap. v. p. 11.

victory of the Aragonese in Naples, unless indeed he should prefer the gratification of a caprice to the safety of his State." *

Then came the rebellion of the Genoese, who were enraged by having fought in vain, and at being compelled to convey back the liberated Aragonese on board their own vessels; and afterwards ensued the alliance between Genoa, Florence and Venice against Milan, which was defended by the forces of Niccolò Piccinini.† At this point Machiavelli begins to make use of the *Commentarii* of Neri Capponi, relying on them even for his narrative of the wars carried on between Sforza and Piccinini.‡ He then passes to the adventures of the celebrated and haughty Cardinal Vitelleschi,§ gleaned from Flavio Biondo, and soon pauses to give an account of the battle of Anghiari, provoked and won by the

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 11.

† *Ibidem*, vol. ii. p. 11 and fol.; Flavio Biondo, Deca. iii. bk. vii. p. 503 and fol.

‡ Let the reader compare the terms in which Machiavelli (*Opere*, vol. ii. pp. 37-40,) relates the reception of Capponi by the Venetian Senate, with the account given by Capponi of the same incident in his *Commentarii*. (Muratori; Rer. ital., vol. xviii. col. 188, 189.) Even from the description of the various routes that Sforza might have followed, it is clear that Machiavelli relies upon Capponi. A little further on the latter (col. 190 D.) speaks of Piccinini's defeat by Sforza, near Brescia, and tells how the former fled through the camp, borne on the shoulders of a Slavonian. In order to make the story more romantic Machiavelli tells us (vol. ii. p. 44) that Piccinini had a very strong German servant, whom he persuaded to put him in a sack, and, as if laden with fighting gear, bear him through the enemy's camp, where no watch was kept, and thus secure his escape. In fact the German, "having hoisted him on his shoulders, and being dressed "like a porter, passed through the whole camp without any hindrance, "and brought him in safety to his own men."

§ Deca. iv. bk. i. p. 563 and fol.

Florentines by means of their hired troops, against the forces of Piccinini, who fought for Visconti. Here again the author allows himself to be carried away by his desire to speak ill of soldiers of adventure. Although able to refer to noted authors giving minute and faithful accounts of the battle, he disregards their testimony in order to indulge in almost incredible exaggeration. While compelled to admit that Piccinini was utterly beaten, he adds that, "in so complete a defeat, in so "prolonged a conflict, lasting from twenty to twenty-four hours, no one was killed save one man, who died, "not from his wounds or other worthy hurts, but by "falling from and being trampled upon by his horse." "The captains would not pursue the enemy, and actually released its men-at-arms, against the will of the Florentine Commissaries, and contrary to every good rule of war, and went off to Arezzo to deposit their spoils. Therefore it is only astonishing that the enemy should have been cowardly enough to let itself be defeated by an army of that sort." * However, the writers of the period say nothing of all this. Capponi, who was one of the Commissaries in camp, makes great complaints of the army; but declares that the enemy was pursued as far as its entrenchments, and that 1540 prisoners were taken. Then, in speaking of the care the Florentines were obliged to bestow on their wounded, he plainly makes us understand that the battle had not been altogether bloodless.† Flavio Biondo, also an excellent authority as to this period, speaks of sixty killed, and four

* *Opere*, vol. ii. pp. 65, 66. † Capponi, *Commentarii*, col. 1195.

hundred wounded, on the Duke's side ; of two hundred wounded, and ten killed, on that of the Florentines ; besides six hundred horses of this and the other army, shot down by the artillery. He farther adds that Captain Astorre Manfredi was made prisoner after being wounded.* Bracciolini says that the enemy had forty dead, and many wounded.†

After recounting the taking of the Casentino, thanks to the efforts of Commissary Capponi,‡ and the death of Rinaldo degli Albizzi, Machiavelli concludes the fifth book, and begins the sixth by an introduction in which he reiterates his laments on the manner in which wars were then conducted. He relates the deeds of arms in Lombardy between Piccinini, who was in the service of the Duke, and Sforza, who was at first fighting for Venice and the Florentines, and then changing sides, served under the Duke against Piccinini, who had also changed his flag. He now suddenly reverts to the affairs of Florence, telling how Cosimo had lived in the greatest rivalry and jealousy with Neri Capponi,

* Biondo, etc., in the single book of Deca. iv.

† Poggii, *Historia florentina*, bk. vii. p. 349, Venetiis, 1715. See also Gino Capponi, *Storia della Repubblica di Firenze*, vol. ii. p. 23, and note 1.

‡ In this latter portion of bk. v. (*Opere*, vol. ii. p. 60 and fol.), Machiavelli not only makes use of Capponi's *Commentarii* (Vide *Commentarii*, col. 1194, C. D.), but also of the *Cacciata del Conte di Poppi*, by the same writer, and published in Muratori, after the *Commentarii*. In this (Muratori, vol. xviii. col. 1220) we find the dialogue between the Count of Poppi and Capponi, also quoted by Machiavelli. (*Opere*, vol. ii. p. 69.) Are-tino's history ends with the battle of Anghiari. Cavalcanti, without describing the battle of Anghiari, passes to the death of Albizzi. The intermediate events are only in part narrated by Cavalcanti in the printed fragments of that which Polidori styles the *Seconda Storia*.

and with Baldaccio d'Anghiari, who was treacherously put to death, and hurled from the palace windows.* Cavalcanti and Machiavelli assign the entire blame† of this deed to Cosimo's friends only; but Guicciardini declares, and perhaps with greater truth, that the prime instigator of the murder, was Cosimo himself, who succeeded in ridding himself of one enemy, and enfeebling another, in such wise that no one could accuse him of guilt.‡

Then again, for this book sins against unity as much as the preceding one, the narrative of the Lombard wars is resumed and carried down to the death of the Duke without heirs: the event so long anticipated by Sforza, his captain and rival. Machiavelli now digresses into a sketch of the history of the Ambrosian Republic and its capital blunder in choosing for its captain one like Sforza, who shamelessly betrayed it, striking it down with the weapons hired for its defence.§ With Simonetta's history before his eyes, he nevertheless, in his enmity to Sforza, the destroyer of a republic, gives an arbitrary colouring to the ugly tale,|| without even doing justice to the

* *Opere*, vol. ii. pp. 81-83.

† Cavalcanti, vol. ii. p. 161; *Opere*, vol. ii. pp. 82-84.

‡ *Storia fiorentina*, in vol. iii. of *Opere inedite*, p. 8.

§ *Historia de rebus gestis Fr. Sfortia*, etc., in Muratori, vol. xxi. pp. 485-598 and fol.

|| His blunders are various. For instance, he tells us (*Opere*, vol. ii. p. 98) that the Duke of Savoy was fighting for the Duke of Orleans, whereas he was a combatant on his own account; that Sforza wished to cross the Adda to attack the Brescian territory, and places Brescia and Caravaggio on opposite sides of the river (p. 99), whereas both are situated on the left bank. And it was Gismondo Malatesta who was captain of the Venetians, not Pandolfo as asserted by Machiavelli.

political and military genius of that leader. And to enhance the strangeness of the whole narrative, he puts in the mouths of the representatives of the betrayed Republic an eloquent discourse, such as they certainly would never have dared to address to Sforza ; but which clearly demonstrates the opinion of his conduct, and the love of liberty by which Machiavelli was always inspired. Coming to the camp of the victorious traitor, the Milanese deputation are supposed to have addressed him in the following terms: "It were useless for us to employ supplications, promises, or threats, for these have no effect upon powerful and cruel men. But now that we are acquainted with thy ambition and cruelty, we would only remind thee of the benefits that thou hast received from the Milanese, in order thus to prove thy ingratitude, and taste some pleasure in casting it in thy teeth. We took thee into our service when thou wert forsaken by all, and instantly thou didst begin to betray us. For thou hast not waited until now to lay bare thy iniquitous soul ; but showed signs of it directly thou wert in command of our forces, by accepting the surrender of Pavia in thine own name. We certainly did wrong to place our trust in one who had so often played the traitor ; but although our scanty prudence may accuse us, it cannot excuse thy perfidy, and thou shouldst judge thyself worthy of the punishment awarded to parricides." *

This is the principal episode in the fifth and sixth books, and, in spite of their disorderly arrangement, serves to emphasize their aim and to give them unity. Sforza's

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 103-106.

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career, in fact, and the means by which he grasped the lordship of Milan, first undermining the power of the Duke, and then perfidiously betraying the Republic, afford the clearest possible exemplification of the little confidence that could be placed in captains of adventure. After this Machiavelli narrates other wars, and thus nears the end of the sixth book, concluding it by an account of the events that occurred in the kingdom of Naples down to the death of Alfonso of Aragon and Ferrante's accession to the throne.

He opens the seventh book with excuses for having strayed too far into the general history of Italy; alleging that it seemed indispensable for the better explanation of that of Florence, to which he now returns for a short space, with some fresh reflections, by way of preface, on the methods by which the Medici found their way towards absolute power through the confusion of party strife.

"In all cities, parties are inevitable; but party leaders may become influential and powerful by public or by private courses. When a campaign or an embassy is accomplished in praiseworthy fashion, or when useful counsels are proffered to the Republic, then a man rises by public courses, renders service to his country, and will readily find friends and adherents. When benefits or favours are bestowed on private individuals, and gratifications in the form of money or office; when the people are treated to amusements and public festivities, then men rise by private courses and gain partizans who create sects, which can never fail to produce evil. A wise

legislator will always seek to crush sects, even if divisions cannot be altogether avoided. Neri Capponi attained power solely by public measures; Cosimo de' Medici both by public and private measures, and accordingly gained not only friends but partizans who formed themselves into a sect. This remained more or less united from 1434 to 1455, and during those twenty-one years, succeeded by means of the Balle, in being no fewer than six times at the head of affairs. But after Capponi's death (1455) there was a split among the partizans of the Medici, some again desiring the Balla, others election by ballot. The former carried the day, and thereupon the sect became more powerful and audacious than before. This government, which lasted eight years, was insupportable and violent, for Cosimo, being old and weary, allowed his adherents to do what they would, without restraint, and his friend Luca Pitti thought of nothing but the construction of his palace, and accepted contributions from every one." *

Cosimo's death took place in 1464, and Machiavelli was necessarily obliged to insert an eulogium on him. He accordingly says, that Cosimo afforded an unique example of power achieved in a free city, without violence and by prudence and astuteness only. He succeeded in holding the State for thirty-one years, turning both the internal divisions of the city as well as its external wars to his own advantage, inasmuch as he could discern danger from afar, and prepared his remedies in good time. Machiavelli likewise alludes to

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 147.

Cosimo's patronage of letters and the arts ; but even at this point he shows no inclination to enlarge on the subject of the new culture then initiated in Florence, and in the promotion of which the Medici had so large a share. Then, being neither able nor willing to say all that he thought of Cosimo's political character, he winds up by reporting a few of his sayings, which certainly furnish a sufficiently clear idea of the Pater Patriæ even in his least praiseworthy aspects :—States are not to be ruled by paternosters.—A worthy man may be made with two ells of crimson cloth.*—This latter dictum was Cosimo's reply to those who accused him of admitting men of little worth into the palace and offices of the State. His meaning was, that if you gave any one enough red cloth for an official mantle, or *lucco*, he would be as respectable as any other citizen.

Machiavelli's history now enters upon a new theme, forming the principal subject of its two last books. Italian society was becoming more and more corrupt ; despotism triumphed on all sides ; war was conducted in an increasingly scandalous fashion ; the only protests, only signs of energy and love of liberty, consisting in the many conspiracies hatched during those years. Therefore conspiracies and the devices by which tyrants sought to defend themselves against their own subjects are the chief topics of the narrative. The events that Machiavelli had henceforth to relate were to be found recorded in many contemporary histories, and were fresh in the memories of all men. For that reason it is superfluous

* *Opere*, vol. ii. pp. 148-155.

to enter upon an investigation of his authorities. He told of events known and repeated by all ; he sometimes studied the accounts given by others, and even confirmatory documents ; he sometimes trusted to his own memory. What specially engaged his attention was the analysis of the passions and feelings animating the conspirators, whose doings he describes and represents with an eloquence and force rendering certain of these pages some of the finest in his history. But here, also, for the better accomplishment of his design, he does not scruple to occasionally arrange facts and invent speeches according to his own liking.

He starts by narrating the end of Jacopo Piccinini, who, being encouraged by Sforza, left Milan and went to Naples, where he was perfidiously murdered by Ferrante of Aragon. Machiavelli unhesitatingly attributes this crime to the concerted treachery of two Italian princes who, like all their colleagues, "feared in others the valour that they had not themselves, and crushed it so utterly that it ceased to exist in any man, which afterwards proved the cause of the general ruin." * Guicciardini, on the other hand, is more cautious in his judgments, and remarks that even if the agreement, always indignantly denied by Sforza, was actually made, it was impossible to ascertain the fact with any certainty, because the two sovereigns would never have concluded it in a way that could become patent to others." †

Then follows the plot woven in Florence against Piero

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 158.

† Guicciardini, *Storia fiorentina*, p. 17 and fol.

de' Medici, a weak man both in body and mind, but who on this occasion showed himself superior to the common expectation. Nevertheless, Machiavelli colours his facts in a way that unduly enhances the prudence and promptitude exhibited by Piero. The latter received a note of warning from Ercole Bentivoglio, informing him that his enemies had collected troops and were already on the march to Florence. Thereupon, although in the country and prostrated by sickness, Piero immediately sent off despatches summoning armed adherents to his aid, and had himself placed in a litter and conveyed back to the city under their escort. Once within the walls this unexpected promptitude enabled him to set matters straight. But Machiavelli is not satisfied with this plain version of the affair, and to make Piero seem far more sagacious than he really was, pretends that the latter, being aware that a plot was on foot against him, only feigned to have received a letter from Bentivoglio, as a pretext for suddenly taking arms. Still, his unfaithfulness to history in favour of the Medicean acumen does not preclude him from censuring the conduct of Piero and his friends in persecuting his adversaries so fiercely, "that it seemed as though God had delivered this city as a prey into their hands."* It is impossible to suppose that similar blunders were always involuntary, for we often find proofs to the contrary. In fact, shortly afterwards, the exiles that desired to return to Florence applied for Piero's permission. Among others, Angelo Acciaiuoli wrote to him from

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 177. *

Siena, asking pardon in somewhat ironical and almost offensive terms, and Piero replied, refusing pardon, but in a courteous and sufficiently dignified tone. Both letters are still extant, and Machiavelli had undoubtedly seen them, for he gives certain portions of them verbatim, while altering the rest so as to make Acciaiuoli appear humbler, Piero harder and more cynical than was really the case.* The latter was sometimes positively eccentric, and then yielded solely to the caprices of his fancy.

Hence Ammirato is not altogether wrong, when, on coming to this point in his *Storie Fiorentine*, he loses patience, and after indicating various errors in Machiavelli's work, declares that the latter changes names and years, adds, takes away, diminishes, and what is worse, not always by mistake, but of set purpose and to enhance the eloquence of his narrative.† In fact, in

* The two original letters are printed in Fabroni's *Vita Laurentii Medicis Magnifici*, vol. ii. p. 36. If compared with those given by Machiavelli (*Opere*, vol. ii. p. 173 and fol.), it will be seen that while certain phrases are correctly reproduced, all the rest is substantially altered.

† Ammirato had some justification in saying this; but he exaggerated, because he entirely failed to grasp the historical value of Machiavelli's work: he only praised its style, and blamed everything else in it, including the language. *Vide* what he says in the *Ritratti*, published in the second volume of his *Opuscoli*. Meanwhile, this is what the same author writes of Machiavelli in his *Storia*, bk. xxiii. vol. v. p. 169 (Florence, Batelli, 1846-1849): "He makes it appear that the Duke Francesco died after the 'gonfalonierate of Niccolò Soderini, and that Piero de' Medici was alive after the death of Pope Paul. He attributes to Luca Pitti that which appertained to Roberto Sostegni, names Bardo Altoviti as Gonfalonier of justice after Ruberto Lioni, who never held that post. In short, he changes years, alters names, twists facts, confounds causes, increases, adds, takes away, diminishes, and does anything that suits his fancy, without check, without any lawful restraint, and what is still more tiresome, in many places it would seem that he does all this rather of set purpose

describing a little later on, the battle of Molinella in 1466, between the Venetians and the Florentines, he, as usual, winds up with the following words: "They came to a pitched battle, that went on for half the day without either side giving way. Nevertheless, there were no killed; a few horses only were wounded, and some prisoners taken on either side." * Ammirato † justly remarks that there was gross exaggeration in this, inasmuch as all writers of the period speak of about several hundred slain, and Guicciardini says outright that the battle was "a gallant deed of arms." ‡

After this Machiavelli returns to the subject of conspiracies. A Florentine exile, one Bernardo Nardi, in concert with Diotisalvi Neroni, went to Prato to rouse that place to revolt against Florence, and Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, who had now succeeded to Piero.

"than because he is mistaken, or is ignorant that those things happened otherwise, and perhaps he did them in order to make his writing finer or to relieve it from tedium."

Gino Capponi, in his *Storia della Repubblica di Firenze* (vol. ii. p. 88, note 2 and elsewhere), also recognizes that Ammirato is right, and adds that Bruto, who lived a century later than Machiavelli, wrote that he only followed him when absolutely compelled to do so, because he so frequently found him incorrect.

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 178.

† This is the account given by Ammirato, vol. v. bk. xxii. p. 178:

"Both parties fought with incredible valour until nightfall, with the loss on either side of three hundred men-at-arms, and four hundred horses, if we may believe the writer of the *Life of Cognition* (Bartolommeo Colleone). The writer on the affairs of Ferrara numbers the slain at one thousand. Some memoirs in my possession give the number as eight hundred, of whom the greater part were Venetians. Machiavelli, with his customary sneers at the expense of hired troops, says that no one was killed. By Sabellico, this battle is styled very sanguinary, although he does not give the number of the slain."

‡ *Storia fiorentina*, p. 22.

In recounting this affair, Machiavelli describes a scene unnoticed by other writers, and that has but little show of credibility. He tells us that Nardi seized the Podestà, and was on the point of hanging him by the neck from the palace window, when the latter, with the halter already about him, pronounced so logical and well reasoned a speech, accompanied by so many promises, that Nardi was induced to set him at liberty.* But directly the Podestà was free, the conspiracy collapsed and Nardi's head was cut off. The truth was that the enterprise failed at the beginning, because the people refused to rise, and the representative of the Florentine government had no difficulty in overcoming and punishing the rebels.

After the rebellion, surrender, and most inhuman sack of Volterra, Machiavelli comes to the principal episode of the seventh book, namely the conspiracy against Galeazzo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, which broke out in 1476. This is described with much vigour, and its style rises in intensity towards the tragic close of the sanguinary drama. With the touch of a Tacitus, the author depicts the vices of the Duke, who injured every one, insulted every one, making public boast of the women he had dishonoured, and records the fierce hatred against his tyranny that raged in his victims' minds. While composing this narrative, Machiavelli must certainly have made himself acquainted with the daring confession of Olgiati, afterwards published by Corio, and accordingly gives a very truthful and remark-

* *Opere*, vol. ii. pp. 187, 188.

ably enthusiastic description of the ardour of this youth and his two companions, and of how they were stirred to conspiracy by the Latin writers they had studied with their master, Niccolò Montano. Their preliminary speeches and preparations, their zealous training in the art of dealing quick and violent blows with sheathed daggers, and above all the strange mixture of pagan hatred against tyranny, and the Christian sentiment with which they sought to justify that hate, are all rendered and held up to our view with so much graphic power as to afford us a most vivid and accurate perception of the modes of thought and feeling of the period. One, too, that has hitherto remained unequalled in the pages of any other writer, whether of ancient or modern times. And Machiavelli surpasses himself, when, after the murder of the Duke in church, he describes the heroic end of Olgiati, the only one of the conspirators who survived the first outburst of popular wrath. When subjected to torture, this youth, as it is even recorded in the documents of his trial, invoked the aid of the Virgin, and strode undauntedly to the scaffold, declaiming Latin couplets in praise of liberty.* Certainly Italian prose could hardly furnish specimens of a more vigorous and eloquent style than that attained by Machiavelli at this point.

Nevertheless, he was equal to a still higher flight. The eighth book is a sequel to the seventh, and pursues the same theme. And having already explained his general views on conspiracy in his *Discourses*, the author

* *Opere*, vol. ii. pp. 198-203.

now, without any preamble, dashes into the history of the Pazzi plot that broke out in Florence in the year 1478. For this was the central point, the climax of the series of dark and sanguinary deeds recorded in the two concluding volumes of the *Histories*. It had been already narrated by Poliziano and other eye-witnesses, and was, therefore, well known to all Florence. Machiavelli must have certainly questioned more than one of those who were present at its occurrence, and read the confession of Montesecco, one of the conspirators,* which was made public four months after the event, and is also recorded by Guicciardini.† The narrative of so famous a conspiracy allowed no scope for capricious variations; accordingly, it is not only an exact and faithful account, but also a true masterpiece of style. Once or twice the author is carried away by his own eloquence, and adds a few minor details of his own invention; but as he makes no change in essential facts, this only serves to dress them in livelier tints. Here and there the vivid and forcible narrative is interrupted by brief reflections, but these are parentheses that enhance rather than lessen its effect.

Montesecco, who was a soldier of fortune, refused to take part in the execution of the plot, on learning that Lorenzo and Giuliano were to be stabbed in the Duomo at the moment of the elevation of the host. He would not add sacrilege to treason. Two other men were

* So says Ammirato, and so, too, may be inferred from Machiavelli's own narrative. *Vide* Capponi, *Storia*, etc., vol. ii. p. 113, note 1.

† *Storia fiorentina*, p. 42.

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therefore chosen in haste, and one of these being a priest, it was thought that he would have fewer scruples, by reason of his greater familiarity with consecrated things. But on the contrary, this man proved the ruin of the enterprise, "inasmuch as, more than in any other affair, "a great and steadfast mind inured by experience to "matters of life and death is indispensable to business of "this kind, wherein even men skilled in war and stained "with blood have very often been found to lack "courage." * Machiavelli is absolutely unrivalled in his description of the conspirators, who, to ensure striking both their destined victims at the same moment, go to seek Giuliano and escort him to the cathedral. "It is "truly a noteworthy matter, that so great a hatred, so "fixed a resolve to commit so monstrous an excess, "could be so courageously and persistently concealed "by Francesco (Pazzi) and Bernardo (Bandini). For in "conducting him to the temple, they entertained him "by the way, and even in the church, with merry "jests and youthful chatter. Nor, under colour of "caressing him, did Francesco forget to press him in his "arms, in order to ascertain if he were provided with "a cuirass or any other defensive armour." †

Afterwards, at the destined moment, he threw himself on him, "covered him with wounds ; and struck at him "with so much determination, that, in the blindness of his

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 214. In the *Discourses*, he had already made the identical remark on the same subject. "Forasmuch no man, without "previous experience, can be assured of his aptitude for any great deed." *Discorsi*, bk. iii. ch. 6 ; in the *Opere*, vol. iii. p. 331.

† *Ibidem*, vol. ii. pp. 214, 215.

"fury, he inflicted a serious injury on one of his own legs." Lorenzo had escaped the strokes of the assassins, and Bandini, seeing him still alive after Giuliano was dead, vainly made a desperate rush at him, and killed another who threw himself between them, for Lorenzo had time to save himself by flight into the sacristy. So great was the tumult, that it seemed as though the cathedral were falling.* The terrific confusion of the crowd, the shrieks, the wounded men, and the pools of blood, are brought vividly before our eyes, and no less graphic is the description of the slaughter committed during the following days by the infuriated populace, stirred to increased wrath by Lorenzo de' Medici, who was panting for revenge on the conspirators. Francesco de' Pazzi and others were hung from the windows of the Palazzo Vecchio; his aged kinsman, Jacopo, vainly imploring the help of the people, vainly invoking the name of liberty. "The former had been deafened by "the fortune and generosity of the Medici, the latter was "no longer known in Florence. . . . The limbs of murdered men were to be seen transfixed on pikes, or "dragged through the city ways."† Jacopo was captured while seeking to escape over the neighbouring hills, nor would the country folk listen to him when he begged them to kill him for pity's sake. Condemned to death and buried in the family tomb, his body was afterwards exhumed as excommunicate and was buried near the

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 216. Poliziano, in his "*De pactiana coniuratione*," says: "Fuerunt et qui crederent templum corruere."

† *Ibidem*, vol. ii. pp. 216 and 219.

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walls, only to be again disinterred and dragged through the streets of Florence, by the same halter with which he had been hanged. At last the corpse was thrown into the Arno, where it was long to be seen floating, a loathsome spectacle to all men.*

After this most prominent episode, the eighth and last book continues the narrative of other Italian wars and conspiracies, down to the decease of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1492, with which it ends. Machiavelli gives a long description of Lorenzo's character, and has much to say in his praise. He styles him able and fortunate in all things save business matters, which went as badly with him as they had gone well with Cosimo. He alludes in general terms to the public works accomplished by him, to the patronage accorded by him to letters and art, and to the great reputation in which he was held by all contemporary princes. "The which reputation was daily "increased by his own sagacity, for he was eloquent "and keen-witted in discourse, wise in resolve, and "prompt and courageous in action. Nor can any vice be "ascribed to him capable of staining his many virtues, "although he was strangely addicted to sensual pleasures, "and his delight in the company of facetious and sarcastic men, and in childish diversions was greater than "could seem fitting in a person of his consequence."†

These eulogies, although for the most part deserved and universally reiterated, are nevertheless very vague and indefinite, since, without many limitations either expressed or understood, it was impossible for Machiavelli to cherish

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 220.

† *Ibidem*, vol. ii. pp. 273, 274.

admiration for one whose craft had completed the destruction of Florentine liberty, and who had devoted himself to the patronage of artists and *litterati*, when, on the contrary, he should have felt bound to train men for military service. But Guicciardini, who had never experienced any very ardent enthusiasm for the Republic, and who wrote his *Florentine History* in his youth, when the Medici were in banishment and no one foresaw the possibility of their return, was able to speak of Lorenzo with far greater freedom and independence of mind. Accordingly, his portrait of that prince is much more faithful, his judgment on him far more certain and definite. He says that he was a tyrant, but of all tyrants the most amiable. He acknowledges and extols the versatility, elegance and originality of his intellect. As a politician, he judges him inferior to Cosimo, who in circumstances of greater difficulty incurred fewer dangers, and founded a State that Lorenzo was frequently on the verge of losing. The latter was intensely proud, ruled by distrust and espionage, exalted men of scanty merit, abased others of the greatest authority and credit, and promoted corruption. And Guicciardini states all this with the utmost calm, and without ever betraying the least vehemence either for or against liberty, for or against the Medici.*

Now come the Historical Fragments,† which are

* *Vide* chap. ix. of his *Storia fiorentina*.

† *Opere*, vol. i. p. 277 and fol. At page 340 begins the *Extracts from letters to the Ten of Balla*. The editors of the *Opere* (P.M.) have published from the Ricci Codex and the Palatine Manuscripts, a so-called new series of *Estratti di lettere ai Dieci*. But without fear of making any blunder,

The Historical "Fragments" and the "Extracts." 329

disconnected pages intended to be incorporated in succeeding books that were never completed. On glancing over them, we may easily ascertain in what way they were composed by Machiavelli, and even the method pursued by him in writing the most recent period of his *Histories*. The *Fragments* run from 1494 to 1499, and are divided into two parts, the second and most shapeless of which is entitled : *Estratti di lettere ai Dieci di Balìa*. It is known that these magistrates had to receive the communications of the war-commissaries and the ambassadors. Machiavelli's *Estratti* were taken from these letters, and are mere memoranda serving for the composition of his *Frammenti*, which in their turn are disconnected scraps of the *Storie*, and generally narratives of the wars of the Republic. The *Fragments* are very unequal in style ; some being almost finished and polished compositions, while others, on the contrary, are

we may say, that at least in so far as Machiavelli is concerned, the publication is entirely useless. The two first *Estratti* (*Opere* (P.M.), vol. ii. pp. 156-160 and 160-166) are really autographs of Machiavelli, and run from 1494 to 1495. But it is scarcely worth while to publish shapeless and very scanty excerpts from letters, or equally shapeless notes, when we are in possession of the *Frammenti* for the same years, with all the preliminary extracts filled out and corrected by numerous fresh details? Two more *Estratti* follow (*Ibidem*, pp. 166, 167, and 167-182) relative to the years 1495 and 1496. These are not written by Machiavelli, but by Agostino di Terranuova, and they are not extracts from letters addressed to the Ten, but memoranda jotted down in the Chancery of the Ten, regarding letters already written, or about to be written. Machiavelli had nothing to do with these, his sole connection with them being that these memoranda were found among his papers. Then, as now, similar memoranda were kept by all *employés* in public offices, and Machiavelli probably found them useful, when he had to ransack the Archives for letters of the Ten. The same may be said of nearly all the succeeding *Estratti*.

still in the first rough stage of sketchiness. Here and there we even meet with the identical phraseology of the letters upon which they were founded. In fact, we often read : *your soldiery, your ambassadors* did or said this or that. Elsewhere, we come across simple reminders for the writer's personal use—"Mem. : to ask Francesco Pepi for an answer to this." * And naturally there is still more of the negligence of a first sketch in the *Extract* beginning from the year 1497, and principally treating of Tuscan matters and the internal policy of the Republic, although barely outlined by the author, who proposes to examine them more carefully at a future time. "On the eighth day of April, 1498, King Charles died of "apoplexy, and on the same day occurred the affair of "the friar, of which a detailed account must be given." † Elsewhere he refers to projected researches among the letters and documents in the archives: "The whole "affair will be found in a letter on the file. There are "many letters in file, from which it can be ascertained "how and when the enemy's forces came to Marradi." ‡

This method of composing contemporary histories was then very general. Buonaccorsi's Diary is entirely compiled from official letters to the Ten and the Signory ; the Diaries of Marin Sanudo are little more than a gigantic collection of ambassadors' letters and reports,

* *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 312.

† *Ibidem*, vol. ii. p. 350. This is an allusion to Savonarola, who was hung and burnt on the 23rd of that month. The 7th of April was the day of the abortive ordeal by fire, and then came the news of the death of Charles VIII. on the same date.

‡ *Ibidem*, vol. ii. pp. 353 and 361.

The Rough Sketch of the "Histories." 331

with the addition of many others from private individuals. Machiavelli, however, who like Guicciardini, was writing a history, not a diary, was obliged to arrange his materials, and bestow great attention on his style. Hence, after jotting down his memoranda, he worked very carefully upon certain parts of his narrative; then arranged the whole according to a general design, with much re-writing and correction. Even his *Florentine Types*—*Nature di nomini fiorentini*, are merely four portraits already written and revised, for future insertion in his *Histories*, as is plainly evidenced by their construction,* and from one or two of them being already incorporated in the *Fragments*.

A thousand other proofs may also be found of the extreme care with which Machiavelli polished his style. Among his manuscripts there is a large portion of a sketch of the *Histories*, that seems to have gone through several revisions. It has been recently published, and if we compare it with the printed version of the same work, subsequently revised by the author, we shall see that the final corrections were generally simple alterations of style, and can form an idea of the principle upon which they were made. Machiavelli seldom follows the fashion, then so prevalent among literary men, of using elegant

* These are their opening sentences: "Thus died Piero Capponi. In his childhood this man (Antonio Giacomini)—The Orators chosen were Messer Francesco dei Pazzi, bishop of Arezzo, and Messer Francesco Pepi, jurisconsult.—Such was the unworthy end of Francesco Pepi."—The portrait of Capponi was already introduced in one of the *Frammenti*, although in a less finished shape. Perhaps he had made a separate copy of it, in order to polish and revise it afresh.

words or phrases in order to render his periods more Latinized than in their primitive shape. On the contrary, his corrections aimed at simplifying his style, and by force of simplicity enhancing its vigour and power.* The spoken language, with all its native freshness, sometimes even with its idiomatic expressions, is never entirely banished from the *Histories*, although he endeavours to give it softness, strength, and polish, by the continual study of Latin classics. The marvellous force and originality of his style is mainly derived from the self-control enabling him to express with limpid truthfulness his most elevated and ardent ideas. And it is in his highest flights of enthusiasm that he makes use of the most familiar language. Dante Alighieri is likewise most clear and spontaneous in the sublimest Canti of the *Divina Commedia*, and accordingly is the greatest of our poets, just as Machiavelli is undoubtedly the best of our prose writers.

This fiery vigour results from the qualities inherent to Machiavelli's mind : from his unfaltering ardour for his country and its freedom. For this is the animating spirit of his *Histories*, no less than of his political writings. The patriot and philosopher is never forgotten

* These fragments of sketches (of bks. ii., iv., vi. and vii.) are published in vol. ii. of the *Opere* (P.M.) with the title : *Frammenti autografi delle Istorie Fiorentine*. Signor Passerini hoped at first that he had discovered a part of the finished original of the work ; but on being advised of his mistake, he published first the *Histories* and then the rough sketches, without collating them. The latter, therefore, are almost useless, whereas they would have served, with a few variations of the text given in the shape of notes, to exhibit Machiavelli's method of correcting and improving his style.

in the historian. And this, as we have seen, is the source of the merits and defects of the work, as will be still more clearly evidenced by comparing it with Guicciardini's *History of Italy*. The latter has no theories to demonstrate, is never transported by enthusiasm, is always calm, cool, and impassible. Occasionally, it is true, he yields to an impulse of rather exaggerated self-praise, rather exaggerated depreciation of his political opponents ; but an irresistible instinct to paint things as they really are, with their causes and immediate results, soon regains the victory, for this is the distinguishing speciality of his intellect. In his autobiographical *Ricordi*, Guicciardini exhibits his own weaknesses, the defects and vices of his ancestors, with a frankness that resembles cynicism, but is merely a positive passion for describing men in their naked reality.

And if Guicciardini does not always succeed in discovering the rational connection of the huge multitude of facts that he arrays before us, he never tries to establish an artificial connection between them. He still adheres too much to the annal form, that Machiavelli had already discarded, and thus is continually obliged to interrupt his narrative in order to resume it the following year. This often renders his work very involved and laborious. The history of Italy is far more complex than that of Florence, and so thronged with events that even at the present day we cannot succeed in arranging it in logical sequence and rational unity. But the space of time embraced by Guicciardini is much more limited than that treated in Machiavelli's work. The former writer

chiefly devoted himself to contemporary events, in many of which he played a prominent part : his knowledge of these and of the individuals concerned in their accomplishment is always wide and profound. There was no scope for hypotheses nor theories, nor even for inquiry into the great laws of history and remote causes of events : all that was needed was a searching and accurate study of reality. And in this Guicciardini is still unrivalled.* His researches were numerous, his experience vast ; no one could surpass him in the comprehension and delineation of the nature of statesmen, and of the most tangled diplomatic intrigues of his time. Born and educated in Florence, then the chief centre of political activity, acumen and culture, he was sent, in his youth, to the court of Ferdinand the Catholic, where he gained acquaintance with the affairs of Europe. After his return to Italy, he filled high offices in the service of the popes. He had to govern extensive provinces in very difficult times ; he played a very important part in the great events then occurring in Italy, and always proved himself to be a genuine statesman. This experience and these qualities, are alike conspicuous in his work.

Italians had long learnt how to write admirable municipal histories ; Guicciardini was the first to compose a really general history of equal merit. To his unrivalled Florentine penetration he added a practical knowledge of the general politics of Italy and the whole

* The illustrious historian, Leopold Ranke, has expressed a different opinion. *Vide* our remarks upon Guicciardini at the end of Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition.

of Europe, and an independence and breadth of judgment that was never fettered by local prejudices, never indulged in rash speculations. All this is to be seen in his history and his discourses. While the works of Machiavelli often start from a general conception and are devoted to its demonstration, those of Guicciardini, on the contrary, seek to display the intrinsic nature and connection of facts, to show their causes and nearest results; and only to indicate what is necessary and possible to be done at the given moment, the passing hour.

The frequently repeated adage that the style is the man, is strongly proved in this case. Guicciardini's *Storia Fiorentina*, as well as all the *Inedited works*, written in his first youth or amid the whirl of affairs, without any pretence of literary merit, are so graphic, have so spontaneous an elegance, that it would be easy to confuse his style with that of Machiavelli, but for the ardent enthusiasm that always animated the latter and never affected the immoveable serenity of the former. But when Guicciardini set himself to write the *History of Italy*, and wished to perform the task with added pomp and dignity, he increased the force and often even the eloquence of his style; but thereby lost his primitive simplicity and became artificial. His laboured phraseology, his too Ciceronian periods are painfully fatiguing to the reader. Nor is there any ground for the assertion, that these defects were caused by want of leisure for the correction and revision of his work. On the contrary, it was by too much polish, too much straining after effect that he changed and ruined his style. We find the clearest

proofs of this in his original manuscripts, which are corrected and re-copied over and over again.* His letters and reports, written on the spur of the moment, are, instead, thoroughly simple and elegant. When he sought to elevate his ideas, and to clothe them in more ceremonious and grandiose dress, he could not avoid regarding them with the glance of an outsider and at once fell into the vice of artificiality. Machiavelli, on the other hand, found sublimity in all that he felt most profoundly ; in that which was nearest and most akin to his mind. It was then that he rose superior to himself and became increasingly simple and natural. The flame of patriotism burnt more quickly and purely in him than in Guicciardini, and he was the greater writer, because he was the better man of the two, all calumnies of his detractors notwithstanding.

* *Vide* the above-mentioned *Observations* on Guicciardini at the end of Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition.

CHAPTER XIV.

Death of Adrian VI.—Election of Clement VII.—Battle of Pavia—Conspiracy of Morone.

WHILE Machiavelli was still engaged upon his uncompleted *Histories*, events occurred that brought his literary labours to a sudden close. Serious and unforeseen political complications recalled him to public life for the remaining years of his existence—last years that were full of pain, since he was forced to witness the ruin of his country, without his own endeavours having any power to mitigate its woes.

The death of Adrian VI. took place on the 14th September, 1523. The ensuing election was of the highest importance, as the rival influences of France and Spain, already battling out in the world for the dominion of Italy, were combating each other in the Conclave. It would be easy for the new Pope to weigh down the balance on either side. Therefore the struggle was carried on with the utmost heat; cardinals poured in from all quarters, among them Soderini, who was still a very powerful personage although only just released from the prison into which Adrian had thrown him. On perceiving how rapidly Giulio de' Medici was gaining ground, backed by the Spanish influence, he at once joined that

side, and thus secured his own victory. Accordingly, during the night of the 18-19th November, Giulio was elected, and immediately assumed the name of Clement VII. Every one knew that he was of illegitimate birth, although he did his utmost to conceal it. It is said that fortune smiles on bastards; nevertheless it was as hostile to him, as it had been in every way favourable to Leo X. Even the worst-considered matters turned out well for that Pontiff, whereas the most carefully planned schemes of Clement VII. came to an evil ending. His reign was no less fatal to himself than to Florence, to Italy, and to the Church.

At the moment of assuming the tiara, Clement was reported to be a pious man, of virtuous life, extremely clearheaded, untiringly laborious, and with much knowledge of affairs and human passions. All believed him to have been the guide of Leo X., and to have a far greater capacity for rule. But Leo X., notwithstanding his love of pleasure and dislike of fatigue, had possessed a certain political instinct enabling him to adopt the gravest resolves without undue hesitation. He had only made use of Cardinal Giulio to obtain required information, undertake necessary inquiries, and execute his own decisions. For the latter was so convenient an instrument as to appear to lead the ruler that he served. "In this manner," remarks Guicciardini, "the affairs manipulated by these two very different natures, served to prove how opportune may sometimes be the mixture of two contraries." *

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. viii. bk. xvi. p. 79.

When Clement VII. was called upon to direct the affairs of the Church singlehanded, it was soon discovered that he was absolutely devoid of the faculty constituting the practical genius of statesmen, which, by leading them to take an almost instinctive reckoning of the unforeseen, urges them to rapid resolve. Timid and irresolute, he shrank from all great responsibility, and this weakness of character, that now became fatal to him, was increased by the nature of his intellect, which, at the most critical moments, spent itself in lengthy meditation on the *pros* and *cons* of every possible decision. And as if that were not enough, he chose for his counsellors two men of opposed sentiments: the one an Italian, Giovan Battista Giberti; the other a German, Niccolò Schomberg. The latter, who had been a monk in the days of Savonarola, and afterwards Archbishop of Capua, was keen, tenacious, impetuous, and an ardent partisan of Spanish policy; he dominated the Pope, and was almost feared by him. Giberti, on the contrary, won his master's affection, was guided rather by impulse and passion than by reason, so that after being at first a determined adversary of France, he afterwards became as warm a promoter of her interests. It is easy to understand the great peril involved in seeing the Papal throne occupied by a man bewildered by so many uncertainties, such opposing influences, on the eve of a gigantic conflict, the issue of which might at any moment hinge upon the policy of the Pope.*

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, loc. cit., pp. 79-85; Ranke, *History of the Popes* (translated from the German), London, Bohn, vol. i. pp. 80, 81.

The Florentines were the first to experience the effects of Clement's vacillating character. Notwithstanding his old acquaintance with them, he began to question every one as to how and by whom they ought to be governed. The majority gave him the reply that he desired, namely, that he should send to Florence Silvio Passerini, Cardinal of Cortona, in company with the two young bastards Ippolito and Alessandro de' Medici, and authorize him to rule the city in their name. But Passerini, being a man of extremely harsh manners, was totally unfitted for the post. Ippolito de' Medici, supposed to be the child of Giuliano and a woman of Pesaro, was barely sixteen years of age. Alessandro, who was still younger, was the son of Lorenzo and a black or mulatto slave, and had his mother's dark skin, thick lips, and frizzy hair. These two boys were the last descendants of the elder Medici branch. Giovanni, already well known and soon to be famous as the captain of the Black Bands, belonged to a collateral branch of the family, and was never in favour with the Pope.

Certain citizens of considerable weight, like Jacopo Salviati, Francesco Vettori and Roberto Acciaiuoli, openly disapproved the idea of Florence being governed by the Cardinal of Cortona, and plainly told the Pope that, as to Ippolito and Alessandro, it would be far

At this point Ranke is in agreement with Guicciardini, who gives an admirable description of the character of Clement VII. ; Gregorovius, *Geschichte*, etc., vol. viii. p. 413 and fol. ; Capponi, *Storia*, vol. ii. p. 344 ; Vettori, *Sommario della Storia d'Italia*, p. 381.

better just now to send them to school to see if they could be trained as statesmen. Why not, they added, allow the Florentines to govern themselves under his protection; why not throw open the Council hall as he had so often talked of doing? But Clement VII. preferred the advice of those who seconded his own wishes, and saying that he deemed it best to adopt the views of the majority, he despatched the boys and the Cardinal to Florence. As a natural consequence, the latter speedily excited general hatred, and this hatred was afterwards directed against all the Medici, and went on increasing until at last it developed into open rebellion.*

Elsewhere, events of still graver importance were now in course of preparation. The grand struggle between Spaniards and French was on the point of decision by the sword. The latter withdrew from Lombardy, and the former advanced full of renewed daring. They had valiant captains; for Charles V. did not choose his leaders, as the French often chose them, at the instance of feminine wiles or court intrigues. Among these leaders were Antonio de Leyva and the Marquis of Pescara, both of Neapolitan birth but Spanish origin, and both men of the highest courage. There was the celebrated Constable de Bourbon, whose desertion of France and his sovereign had made so much noise; and there was the Viceroy of Naples, Viscount de Lannoy, who was of Flemish birth. Francesco I., being determined to put an end to all uncertainty, crossed the Alps with an army of fifty thousand men. On the

* Vettori, *Sommario*, pp. 349, 350.

26th October, 1524, he made his entry into Milan; then went to Pavia, where Antonio de Leyva was shut up with four thousand foot, and where the great quarrel was now to be decided. The Spaniards did all in their power to gain the Pope to their side; but as usual he hesitated. He could not desire the victory of either the French or the Spaniards, since in any case he would be at the mercy of the conqueror, who would naturally become the arbiter of Italy's fate. In fact, the interests of the States of the Church were now inevitably identified with the Italian national independence, and this gave great weight to the policy of the Pope. But neither Leo X. nor Clement VII. ever dared to soar to the lofty level towards which it seemed that events must perforce impel them. Although the best politicians of Italy, and Machiavelli in particular, made a thousand efforts to stimulate and spur them on, yet they never rose above trickery and subterfuge.

Francis I. was strongly entrenched in his camp, while fresh German forces were pouring in to swell the enemy's ranks. He was still at the head of a numerous army, although he had despatched the Duke of Albany, with three thousand foot and two thousand horse to the south of Italy; his Grisons troops had gone to defend the castle of Chiavenna, and his reinforcements from France had been scattered on the road. He had the main body of the enemy in front, and Antonio de Leyva in his rear. And the latter had already made some fortunate sallies, in one of which the valiant Giovanni de' Medici had been gravely wounded, and thus put *hors de combat*

for some time. Provisions were beginning to fail in Pavia, money to run short in the imperial camp. Everything, therefore, might have shown the king the expediency of waiting, and avoiding a pitched engagement. But Pescara, being pressed for time, daily provoked him by well-contrived skirmishes, so that at last he deemed it cowardly to longer refuse battle. On the morning of the 24th February, 1525, Pescara forced his way into the French camp, by a breach made during the night in the wall of the park surrounding the encampment; De Leyva made a sortie from Pavia; the French, who were already prepared, moved forward in order of battle. At first victory seemed to smile upon them; but then Pescara, at the head of the Spanish harquebusiers, succeeded in routing their men-at-arms. Frundsberg gave equal proofs of valour with his landsknechts, and De Leyva joined the others in the general attack. The Swiss at Marignano had already begun to lose their prestige of invincibility, and now at Pavia they fell into confusion, and before long victory declared for the imperial forces. France lost her best captains on this field; her valiant army was defeated, and ten thousand corpses lay scattered on the road between Pavia and the Certosa.* But the crowning blow was the capture of Francis I. on the battle-field. It was on this occasion that he wrote to his mother, the Queen Regent, the celebrated words: "I have lost all, save my honour and

* Prof. de Leva speaks of 8000, Mignet of 10,000, Gregorovius of 12,000 slain. Guicciardini states it to have been generally believed that more than 8000 French perished by the sword, or by drowning in the Ticino.

"my life which has been spared." * Pescara de Leyva and Frundsberg were the heroes of this battle, a more decisive one than any that had been fought for centuries,† inasmuch as it rendered Charles V. the most powerful sovereign in Europe and the arbiter of Italy, whose independence was now indeed lost.

A short time after the battle of Pavia there occurred a very strange incident that has been related and interpreted in various ways by different historians. Among other things it proves very clearly that the Italians had not only recognized the desperate strait they were in, but yearned for deliverance from it, and that the idea formulated by Machiavelli in the exhortation to his *Prince*, was also, if in a vaguer and lesser degree, the idea of many of his compatriots. * Nevertheless, they lacked the qualities required to translate it into action. They all distrusted one another, only seeking, only hoping for foreign assistance. There was no man really capable of taking the lead in the great enterprise; and of all

* "Madame, pour vous faire savoir comment se porte le reste de mon infortune, de toutes choses ne m'est demeuré que l'honneur et la vie, qui est sauve." These were the precise words penned by the king. *Papiers d'état du Cardinal Granvelle*, vol. i. p. 250. Aimé Champollion-Figeac, *Captivité du roi François I.*, p. 129. Vide also Mignet, *Rivalité*, etc., vol. ii. p. 68; de Leva, *Storia di Carlo V.*, vol. ii. p. 242. Tradition has somewhat altered the king's words, attributing these to him instead: "Tout est perdu, fors l'honneur!"

† "Sie est das grossartigste Schlachtenbild des XVI. Jahrhunderts, von homerischer Erhabenheit. Eine weltgeschichtliche Katastrophe hat sich darin concentrirt," Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom.*, vol. viii. p. 34; De Leva, *Storia di Carlo V.*, vol. ii. chap. iv.; Mignet, *Rivalité*, etc., vol. ii. chap. vii. The French work makes too little account of Italian works on this subject, and especially as regards the very conscientious work of Prof. De Leva, which is based on original research.

men the least fitted was Pope Clement VII., whom fate, as if in irony, seemed to persistently thrust into the part of representative of the noblest national aspirations.

On the 1st April, 1525, the imperialists, who although victors had exhausted their money supplies, made an agreement, binding both the contending parties to defend Milan from every hostile attack. The States of the Church, Florence and the Medici remained under the protection of the Emperor, to whom the Florentines—and this was the essential point—were to pay the sum of 100,000 ducats. But the insolence of the conquerors, their continual plundering and imposition of fines, were in no way checked by this agreement, but on the contrary daily augmented. Hence the Italians were increasingly disgusted and irritated at being handed over from one master to another, and could not resign themselves to being henceforth utterly at the mercy of the imperialists, who, already rulers in Naples, were now victorious in Lombardy. But this discontent, however general, was entirely impotent. The only powers in a condition to offer any resistance were the Venetians and the Pope. But the former only thought of their trade and their colonies; the second could neither dare nor decide to do anything.

Meanwhile the government of France was in the hands of the Queen Regent, Louise of Savoy, whose behests were received with unanimous compliance by a nation burning to resume the war in order to avenge their king and deliver him from captivity. This general

thirst for revenge, this desire to retaliate beyond the Alps, gave hope to the Italians. And the Regent, being aware of this, seized the opportunity to inform the Duke of Milan, through his brother, Maximilian Sforza, and the Venetians by other means, that she was ready to assist any general revolt against the imperial rule in Italy, to renounce on the part of France, all pretension to the Neapolitan throne, and to leave Lombardy to the Duke. The same proposal was made to the Pope, who instantly welcomed it with greater ardour than the others. Now, he thought, he could see the possibility of that national war of independence that had so often been suggested and discussed. Many had declared and now again repeated to him that this war would be the salvation of his States and confer upon him the glorious title of Deliverer of Italy, which Giulio II. had, at one time, hoped to obtain, and that even Leo X. had frequently professed to covet.* The Datary, Giovan Matteo Giberti, was the man who chiefly encouraged and urged him in this direction. He was so inflamed by the idea of a national war, that he began to send despatches to the Papal nuncios and envoys extraordinary in order to excite the courage of all the Italian potentates, bidding them "not to let slip an opportunity, that was the finest in the world, for obtaining freedom and acquiring eternal glory."† These were the words employed by him in a letter of the 1st July, 1525, to Ennio Filonardi, Nuncio

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, bk. xiv. vol. vii. pp. 4, 5.

† Letter of the 1st July, 1525, to Ennio Filonardi, Nuncio in Switzerland. *Lettere ai Principi*, vol. ii., at sheet 80r. Venezia, Ziletti, 1575.

in Switzerland, and on the 10th of the same month he wrote to the Auditor Girolamo Ghinucci: "It is my belief that the world is growing young, and that the "extreme misery of Italy will be transformed into the "highest happiness."* And he wrote to all in the same strain. The Genoese Domenico Sauli went to Milan, in the name of the Datary and also of the Pope, with a proposal for an Italian league with France for the liberation of Italy.† Shortly after, the Pope sent definite proposals to France. They were the following: Milan was to be left to the Duke, who could receive help from the Swiss; Naples and Sicily to be freely handed over to the Pope, and be at his disposal. France was to supply 50,000 ducats per month until the end of the war, and meanwhile was immediately to pay two months in advance. She would also be bound to furnish 600 lances and 6000 foot at her own expense, together with a proportionate amount of artillery, and ten or more galleys, as circumstances might demand. And for greater security, a princess of France was to be given in marriage to the Duke of Milan. Thus a perpetual alliance would be concluded between France and Italy, and the latter, on being rid of the imperialists, would immediately send 1000 lances and 12,000 foot at her own expense, to release the king and aid France in every emergency. And France on her side, was to guarantee the same assistance to Italy. All would be

* Letter of the 10th July, 1525, to Guido Guiducci, in the *Lettere ai Principi*, vol. ii., at sheet 86.

† *Vide* Morone's *Esame* in the *Ricordi inediti di Girolamo Morone*, published by Count Tullio Dandolo, Milan, 1855, pp. 152-54.

in readiness for the commencement of the war on this side of the Alps, directly France should have pledged herself, by sending the first instalment of money, and giving her army orders to march.* And while Giberti was using every effort to push on these negotiations with France, he was at the same time urging the Italian potentates to venture on the enterprise, even without any help from abroad. But France, while strenuously inciting Italy to revolt and war, gave her no help beyond words. And being engaged in negotiations for the release of the king, her policy was liable to be changed at any moment. As for the Italians, they not only distrusted France, but distrusted one another, without any exception; and therefore every one sought to keep open a way of escape in case the others should draw back. Consequently all endeavoured to give more or less direct warning of the plot to Charles V. or his representatives, in order to be able on emergency to declare themselves his faithful friends. This did not, however, prevent them from continuing the negotiations they had begun, being resolved to profit by them, if matters succeeded, as the phrase then went, *ad votum*. Such was the policy of the period. Charles V. and his followers behaved with

* Letter of Giberti to Canossa, French envoy to Venice, dated the 8th July. Giberti states that these proposals were despatched to France on the following day. *Lettere ai Principi*, vol. ii., at sheet 85. In fact they are the identical proposals included in the *Recheste mandate ad fare in Franza* per N.S., among the *Documenti concernenti la vita di Girolamo Morone*, published by Giuseppe Müller, in the *Miscellanea di Storia Italiana* of the Royal Turin Association of National History, vol. iii. pp. 436-37. Turin, 1865.

equal falsity, as we shall speedily see. The Venetians approved, but said that their decision depended upon that of the Pope. The latter, who had been the first to encourage the secret bargain, now showed equal eagerness in warning the Emperor to keep good watch over his captains in Italy.* The Duke of Milan turned a favourable ear to the French suggestions; but he, too, by means of the secretary Morone, immediately gave notice of them to the Viceroy, who advised him to continue the negotiations, to see to what they might lead.† Meanwhile, Morone, on his side, was finessing to obtain from the Emperor the investiture of the duchy for Sforza.

At last arrived Domenico Sauli, the Genoese, bringing with him from Rome the definite proposal for an Italian league against the imperialists. The moment appeared to be singularly propitious. Francis I. had asked to be taken to Spain for an interview with Charles V., and the Viceroy had conducted him there without the knowledge of Bourbon and Pescara, who had hotly opposed the measure, because for motives of personal interest they preferred to keep him in Italy. Pescara was specially furious against the Viceroy, and accused him in

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. viii. bk. xvi. p. 56. This writer tells us that the Pope was continually filled by suspicion and anxiety, and accordingly, "from no intent to betray the negotiations, but merely to prepare a refuge in case the thing failed, paid the Kaiser the kind service of "advising him to keep his captains in a good humour." These warnings were conveyed in a *Memoriale mandato d'ordine del Papa Clemente VII., a Monsignor Farnese*. Vide, *Papiers d'Etat du Cardinal Granvelle*, vol. i. p. 295. De Leva, *Storia di Carlo V.*, vol. ii. p. 287.

† Morone also declares this in his *Esame*. Dandolo, *Ricordi*, etc., p. 152.

his rage of having shown cowardice at Pavia, by his frequent cries of: "We are lost!" He added that he was ready to prove the truth of his assertion at the sword's point.* And he even seemed to be irritated against the Emperor, believing him to have sanctioned the Viceroy's proceedings. For these reasons Sauli found a willing hearer, when he spoke to Morone of the proposed league, and in the name of the Pope and the Datary, suggested the idea of offering the kingdom of Naples to the angry and discontented Pescara, on condition of his frankly adhering to the league and assuming its military direction.† Sforza's secretary seemed enchanted by the proposal, and from that moment became the chief manipulator of the plot, and the leading agitator of Italian politics, without, however, ceasing to urge the Emperor to grant the investiture of the dukedom to his own lord. He, too, and even more than the rest, was anxious to keep open a way of retreat, that might at any moment become a necessity. And he contrived to do all this in a way of his own and one befitting his strange character, singular intellect and audacity, and the faithlessness that was as conspicuous in him, as in all other politicians of the age. The result was a dark and shadowy drama that long remained a mystery, and that even at this day, after prolonged research and the discovery of many new documents, has not been entirely cleared up.

Morone was Machiavelli's junior by one year only ;

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. viii. bk. xvi. p. 52.

† Morone's *Esame*. Dandolo, *Ricordi*, etc., pp. 152-159.

he had studied Latin and Greek literature and jurisprudence. Then, entering on a political and administrative career, he served many different masters in the capacity of secretary, chancellor, etc. He made rapid way upon this road, because, besides intellect, he was not only possessed of an audacious and enterprising character, but of enormous cleverness in penetrating the windings of diplomacy, and thus speedily gained the name of having one of the best heads in Italy. In 1499, when Lodovico Sforza took to flight, Morone was his secretary, and arranged the terms of the surrender; and although these were not accepted by the French invaders of Lombardy, he was soon after taken into their service. Later, he promoted the choice of Lodovico's son Massimiliano as Duke of Milan, and served him faithfully, zealously, and courageously until the young Sforza, worn out by his numerous trials, resigned himself to perpetual banishment in France. After undergoing many other vicissitudes Morone worked hard, when the imperial fortunes were again in the ascendant in Italy, to procure the nomination of Sforza, Lodovico's second son, to the dukedom of Milan. He became secretary to the new prince, and negotiated in his name for the investiture of the duchy, which was at first offered by the Emperor on inadmissible conditions that were afterwards modified and accepted. At the same time he took a most active part in the conspiracy by negotiating with the Pope concerning the Italian league with France against the Empire. He undertook the task of winning over

Pescara, and had already plunged into the work with so much zeal, showing himself so convinced of success and pursuing it so hotly, that he was long considered the original author of a design that, on the contrary, had been first conceived in Rome.

At that time Pescara was reputed to be the first general in Europe. A very ambitious and wholly unscrupulous man, he was now irritated by the departure of Francis I., and also by the idea that he was insufficiently appreciated by the Emperor. Although of Spanish origin, and an enemy of the Italian name, he was yet a native of Italy, and could not be supposed to be utterly callous regarding the fate of his own country. At all events, the promise of a great kingdom seemed a sufficient bait to lure him to the cause. Morone had immense confidence in his own intellect and eloquence, and accordingly never doubted of being able to seduce the ambitious soldier by the prospects of a royal crown, the exacerbated spirit by the offer of means of revenging himself, liberating his country, establishing his fortunes, and acquiring immortal renown. He therefore sought an interview with Pescara, and after demanding and obtaining his pledged word as an honourable soldier to preserve secrecy in any case, he revealed the design of his partners in the league, and laid the great proposal before him, inviting him to be the leader of the enterprise. He reminded him of the universal suffering and oppression of Italy, and her need of a deliverer; gave a vivid picture of the glory of liberating the country, the happiness of possessing a kingdom, the holiness of a war

desired by the people, assisted by France, and blessed by the Pope. He referred to the examples of ancient * and modern history. Although with less eloquence he must then have expounded the identical ideas expressed at the conclusion of the *Prince*.

But his listener was a soldier equally insensible to eloquence and to historic memories, and with no eye but for the present and present realities. Pescara was aware of the strength of the Imperial arms, the weakness of those of the Italians always at discord among themselves, always suspicious of one another ; and he also knew how little reliance could be placed in the assistance promised by France, who for the sake of releasing her king might at any moment be brought to submit to any conditions. Besides, he was suffering from a malady that

* This is how Pescara described the interview in one of his letters to the Emperor : " Y dende algunos dias vyno Hieronimo Moron a hablarme per "grandes arodeos y ultimamente dezirme que sy yo le prometia la fe de le "tener secreto, que el me dyria y descubriria grandes cosas. Yo le dixi "que le ternia secreto, y le dj la fe. Descubriome el mal contentamyento "de toda Italia, y como toda ella disponya y determynava salyr de sugecyon, "y de Francia abya grande correspondencia y requyrymyentos, y que sy yo "querya sentirme de como me avyan tratado, y de la forma con que procuravan y abyan syempre procurado abaxarme, y acordarme que abia "nacydo Italiano, y que gloria podia ganar en ser el libertador de la "propria patria, que en my mano era ser la cabeza y el capytan de toda "esta empresa, y que el creya, que todos concurrerian en darme el reyno "de Napoles, y que abia tan grandes cosas y tan grandes cymyentos, que "yo veria que era razon de venyr cuello y que podria byen salyr lo que se "desiñava." Letter of the 30th July, 1526, duplicate of one of the 25th, in the *Documenti che concernono la vita pubblica di Girolamo Morone*, collected and edited by Giuseppe Müller, p. 358 and fol. This is the third vol. of the *Miscellanea* by the Turin Royal Association of National History. Vol. ii. contains the *Lettere ed Orasioni Latine di Girolamo Morone*, edited by Domenico Promis and Giuseppe Müller.

must shortly carry him to the tomb. Consequently he had no inclination to accept bills at a long date. But neither was he a man to decidedly reject the highly flattering promises made to him by Morone in name of the Pope and the other powers. For, in conclusion, either the enterprise might succeed, in which case he would certainly have been ready to accept the offer, or there might be no possibility of making it succeed, and even in this case it suited him to feign consent to and complicity in the plot, in order to profit by his knowledge of it, to disclose it to the Emperor. Meanwhile, too, he might be able to extract money from the allies; and this was pressingly needed for his army, which was destitute of everything. Accordingly, after binding himself to secrecy and learning the proposed plans, he neither accepted nor refused the leadership of the enterprise, but hastened to point out the grave difficulties in the way, declaring that first of all he must be certain of not having to violate the rules of honour by which he was bound as a soldier and vassal of the Emperor. He would have the case examined by competent persons; advised Sforza and the Pope to do the same, although of course in general terms, without naming any one, in order that no hint of the precious secret might ooze out. The replies of the Pope and Sforza were not long in coming, although the inquiry bore too much the appearance of an empty pretext. The generals of that period never held themselves bound by national ties, and least of all could the Neapolitan Pescara have any duties towards Spain and the Empire.

He was only bound by those duties as a vassal to which he had in fact alluded. But he was instantly asked to remember that Naples was a fief of the Church, and that, if disposed, he might at once renounce his possessions in Spain for the sake of obtaining a kingdom. Positively, according to the ideas of the period, there was nothing extraordinarily unusual in the proposal now made to him. Had not Bourbon deserted France to enter the imperial service? Had not the Prince of Orange done the same, and had not Pietro Navarro gone over to the French camp from pique against Spain? Although posterity stigmatized these men as traitors to their respective countries, yet they were still numbered at that day among the most esteemed and respected captains, and as merely deserving a certain modicum of blame for having forsaken their natural rulers.* Assuredly, Pescara was not one to pretend to

* On this subject it is useful to refer to the essay of Mons. Ch. Paillard in the *Revue Historique*, iii. année, tome viii. (7th December, 1878) pp. 297-367. *Documents relatifs aux projets d'évasion de François I., prisonnier à Madrid, ainsi qu' à la situation intérieure de la France en 1525, en 1542, et en 1544.* At page 316, the author remarks that notwithstanding the very grave injuries suffered by the Constable de Bourbon at the hands of Francis I. and the Queen Regent, they did not serve to excuse an act of treason endangering the safety, not only of the royal authority, but of the nation itself. "Toutefois on se tromperait singulièrement, si l'on pensait que Bourbon ait été jugé par les contemporains comme il l'a été par la posterité; si l'on supposait que lui même ait senti sur sa tête ce poids inéluctable de honte, de mépris, de reprobation et de haine, dont aujourd'hui tout traite a pleinement conscience. . . . À cette époque, l'idée de patrie, aujourd'hui si puissante et pour ainsi dire souveraine, existait à peine, ou du moins était fort obscurcie par l'idée féodale, encore dominante. . . . Sismondi a sur ce point un mot tout à fait topique: "Les lettres des plus grands seigneurs de cette époque, où il est question

nicer scruples than other men, and had he really desired to change his flag, might easily have found reasons or pretexts for discontent, especially when instigated thereto by the Pope.

The negotiations were actively pushed on ; but France only gave help in words and did not stir.* Pescara continually demanded more money, which it was necessary to give him ; and meanwhile it became known, to the surprise of all, that more landsknechts were pouring down from the Alps. Then it was repeated on all sides that the Emperor was already aware of the conspiracy. In fact, Pescara had kept him informed of everything in frequent despatches, pressing him to come to terms with

"du connétable, ne laissent pas, dit il, entrevoir de blâme." In Italy, where feudal traditions had far less power, and especially in Florence, where the Republic had greatly forwarded the development of the national idea, historians were more severe in their judgment of Bourbon ; yet even they generally speak of his treason to his sovereign, not to his country. Vettori, after relating Bourbon's death under the walls of Rome, adds : "A man undeserving of so honourable a death, after the treason done to his master." *Sommario della Storia d'Italia*, p. 379, Guicciardini (vol. viii. bk. xvi. p. 72) says that although in Spain the Bourbon was received with great honour and as a brother-in-law by Charles V., yet that the nobles of the court "abhorred him as an infamous person, styling him a traitor to his own king."

* On the 5th October, G. Batta Sanga wrote to the French ambassador in Venice : "*Parturient montes, nascitur ridiculus mus*. I think that I may well begin in this manner, since this resolution announced by the French so many days ago, as though it were the advent of the Messiah, of sending help to Italy, has proved to be much less than that which they sent to offer by means of Lorenzo Toscano. Surely they cannot deem all Italians such fools as, in the simple hope of their good faith, to give themselves tied and bound into their hands, in order to improve their position with Cæsar, which, it may be suspected, is probably their real object, this offer being as generally known at Court, as though it were only intended to inspire Cæsar with alarm." *Lettere ai principi*, vol. ii. p. 94¹.

France without delay, because all the world in Italy was against him, all yearning to drive away his army, and that there was a universal hatred for the German and Spanish name.* Giberti's letters clearly show us, that it was known in Rome that the conspiracy was no longer a secret for any one, and it was surmised that Morone had played the traitor as well as Pescara.† Directly the Duke fell seriously ill, Morone declared to Pescara that he would rather yield the duchy to the Emperor than procure the restoration of Massimiliano Sforza, who had proved himself so incapable of its government. And he did not confine himself to words ; but, although the Venetians and the Pope, with whom he was then plotting, had proclaimed themselves entirely hostile to the idea, he had prepared everything for the execution of his plan in the event of the Duke's demise.‡ No one, however, had ever calculated upon the good faith of Morone and Pescara, but rather upon their selfishness and ambition. It was thought that if

* See the correspondence of Pescara with Charles V. in vol. iii. of the before quoted *Miscellanea di Storia Italiana*.

† The Datary, Giberti, wrote to Sauli in a letter of the 19th September, 1525 : how from many quarters the Pope had been warned that Morone and Pescara were betraying him, and that many persons alluded to the negotiations carried on by the allies, and related their minutest details, so that it was plain that all was now public. This naturally gave rise to the gravest suspicions. Nevertheless, Giberti still trusted or feigned to trust in Pescara, and still more in Morone, being unwilling to credit that they could be ignorant of the immense advantages to be reaped from the success of the conspiracy. *Lettere ai Principi*, vol. ii. at sheets 91 and 92.

‡ He declares this himself in his *Esame*, pp. 175-177, and Pescara also states it most emphatically in his letters to Charles V. *Vide* letter 8th September, 1525, to be again quoted later on.

the conspiracy had really any chance of success, both had too much to gain to be likely to abandon it; but it was always expected that they would betray it and apply to the Emperor directly that probability should fail. Accordingly, their main cause for anxiety and discouragement consisted in the arrival of the landsknechts, the non-arrival of any succour from France, and the absence of all present hope of obtaining it.

There was also mutual suspicion between Pescara and Morone. The latter was aware of being greatly detested by the Spaniards, above all by De Leyva, who had threatened to murder him if he could get him into his hands. He knew Pescara well, and had said to Guicciardini: "that there was no one in Italy of greater malignity or less good faith than he." * From all sides warnings came to him to stand on his guard or he would come to a sad end in Pescara's hands. He himself spoke of these rumours to the marquis, but wound up by declaring: "I trust in your Excellency, as I trust in God." † And the imperial captain, in his letters to Charles V. revealing the conspiracy and the promises and speeches made to him by Morone, said that he still felt sure of leading him as he chose. ‡ In truth they were both playing a double game, and were both aware

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. viii. bk. xvi. p. 67.

† *Miscellanea* already quoted, vol. iii. p. 407; letter of the 5th September, 1525; De Leva, *Storia di Carlo V.*, vol. ii. p. 295.

‡ Pescara wrote to the Emperor, in his letter of the 8th September, 1525: "Tengo por fe, que si el duque muere, que Geronimo Moron hará ultimo de potencia en servicio de V. M., pero en esto trova ruyn todo el posible: "es verdad que muestra enteramente fiar de mj, y siempre lo traygo a lo que quiero." *Miscellanea*, etc., vol. iii. pp. 422, 423.

of it. Pescara had allowed it to be understood that he would not hesitate to take the thing in hand could he feel assured of the crown that was promised to him ; but that he had never been able to deceive himself so far as to believe in the possibility of obtaining it. Morone, on the contrary, had been far more credulous ; although less so than was supposed. He was not blind to the difficulties obstructing the enterprise, and knew that he risked his head if he should unduly compromise Pescara. Yet his knowledge of the latter's secret desires helped to reassure him, and on the other hand, he had clearly given him to understand, that, if the enterprise should really have no chance of success, he too would be ready to throw himself heart and soul into the Emperor's cause. For these reasons, when invited to the Castle of Novara for a conference with Pescara, who was then ill, he accepted and went, in the company of De Leyva, although warned by every one that he was rushing on his destruction.*

On the 13th October he had a first interview with Pescara, a second on the 15th, and then was taken prisoner † on his way out, and conveyed to the Castle

* Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. viii. bk. xvi. pp. 66, 67 ; De Leva, *Storia di Carlo V.*, vol. ii. pp. 295, 296.

† Guicciardini (loc. cit., p. 67) and many other historians declare that during the conversation between Pescara and Morone, Antonio de Leyva was listening behind the arras where the marquis had concealed him. But De Leva (*Storia*, vol. ii. p. 297) refuses, we think rightly, to credit this tale, because no mention of it is to be found either in the *Rapporto* of Rosso dell' Olmo, 17th October, 1525 (in *Marin Sanudo*, vol. xi. p. 71), or in the *Cronica* of Grumello. For in fact there was no longer any secret to be discovered, all being as well known to De Leyva as to Pescara.

of Pavia. On the 24th Pescara came to interrogate him, accompanied by De Leyva and the Abbot of Nazaria. There was little either to be asked or answered, for Pescara already knew all, and knew it from Morone's own lips. Nevertheless the latter wrote his confession with his own hand. After protesting in it against the unjust violence to which he had been subjected, and against this violation of good faith, he told the imperial general that he could reveal nothing more than what he had frequently said and repeated. He then traced the whole history of the conspiracy, recalling the offer of the Neapolitan kingdom, and the negotiations for conferring the investiture of Milan upon Sforza, who had declared his acceptance of it, while carrying on his arrangements for a national war against the Emperor.* This last declaration was the pretext of which Pescara availed himself to go straight to Milan and take possession of Lombardy.

And now from one moment to another every one was expecting to hear that Morone had already been put to death, when, to the universal astonishment, Pescara published a decree of the 27th October to the effect that he intended to hold the person of the prisoner in his own keeping, and ordering that the latter's possessions should not be seized but left in the hands of his wife and children, who were to be treated with every respect.† And then, feeling that his end was at hand, for in fact he died on the 3rd December, 1525, at the early age

* Morone's *Esame*.

† *Vide* the decree in Dandolo, *Ricordi*, etc., pp. 201, 202.

of thirty-six years, he made a will, in which he recommended not only the life but the liberty of Morone to the Emperor's mercy, imploring every possible benefit in his behalf, "since otherwise I should hold myself "guilty."* The Abbot of Nazaria and the Marquis del Vasto wrote in singular haste to Morone to inform him that Pescara had recommended him to Charles V. and added that he might rely upon their good offices in his favour. And even De Leyva, who had never had any liking for him, wrote to him from Milan on the 25th March, 1526, in the following terms :

"It shall be contrived that your Excellency may rest "satisfied. So, once more I pray you to be of good "cheer, for I will do for you all that I would were done "for myself, and I recommend myself to you."† Nevertheless, Morone was detained in prison at the pleasure of the Constable de Bourbon, who had assumed the command of the imperial army, and kept him as a hostage, in order to obtain money, of which he was now

* "Item. I bequeath you Hieronimo Morone, who is now in prison, and "I would pressingly supplicate your Imperial Majesty to grant him his life "and every other benefit possible, and I would that nought of that which "I have discovered to the advantage of your Majesty should be held as a "condemnation of the above mentioned prisoner, even allowing that he "may have failed to do that which he should have done. Your Majesty "will graciously grant my request, since otherwise I should hold myself "guilty ('perchè altrimenti me reputerei essere caricato')." Dandolo, *Ricordi*, p. 202. It is impossible to ascertain with any certainty what was "*quella opera che doveva fare*;" it may possibly be an allusion to some promise made to Pescara by Morone during the progress of the conspiracy, or while he was in prison. It is certain that he promised a large sum of money as a ransom, and was then unable to pay it all at once.

† *Vide* the letter in Dandolo, *Ricordi*, etc., p. 204.

in the utmost need. After extracting many thousand ducats from Morone in this way, as well as a bond for the sum of twenty thousand more, on the 1st January, 1527, he signed a decree in which, although charging him with conspiracy, and accusing him of unjust extortion of coin for his private advantage, he extolled his talent, courage, and experience and the services formerly rendered by him to the Emperor. And he ended by stating that in consideration of these merits, of the money recently supplied by him at a moment of extreme need, and of his declared purpose of again rendering useful service to the Emperor, he released Morone and granted him full pardon for all his crimes.* And, what was more important, he shortly after nominated him commissary general to the imperial forces. In fact, we find him fulfilling the duties of this office under the walls of Rome, at the time of Bourbon's death. Then came the sack of the Eternal City, and while Clement VII. was shut up in the Castle of St. Angelo, Morone played a very prominent part in the negotiations then set on foot for his release. By the aid of his talent, energy and experience

* *Privilegium, gratia et restitutio clarissimi com. H. Moroni*, in Dandolo's *Ricordi*, etc., p. 209 and fol.: "Ut negari non posset eum ipsum non mediocrem partem habuisse in victoriis quibus. S. C. M. Italian potitus est. . . . Animadvertentes præterea eiusdem comitis H. Moroni præcipuas animi dotes, ingenti acumen, longum rerum arduarum et grandium usum, animi fortitudinem et inviolabilem erga eos principes fidem, quibus aliquando servitutem suam obtulit et dicavit. . . . Accessit præterea ut in præsentibus rei pecuniariæ necessitatibus, et in tanto sustinendorum exercituum oneri, cum nihil sit magis necessarium pecuniæ, eæque consumptus sint ingentes et fere intollerabiles, is ipse comes Hieronimus de notabili pecuniarum quantitate nobis subvenit et subventurus est, etc."

he rose higher and higher ; became as it were the guiding spirit of the evils wreaked upon Italy by the imperialists, and was in the camp of the army besieging Florence, on the last day of his life, the 15th December, 1530.*

The result of all this was to involve men's minds in numberless doubts, numberless uncertainties as to Morone's character, and the true meaning of the conspiracy. And these doubts and uncertainties swelled to exaggerated proportions when attempts were made to discover a great patriot in a man whose sole and unceasing aim was to make his way in the world, and who had always changed sides to suit the personal interests that prompted his every act. Regarded as a patriot, his conduct remains as absolutely inexplicable as that of Pescara, De Leyva, and De Bourbon. How was it that Morone, in the face of general warning, and with certain knowledge that Pescara was now in perfect agreement with the Emperor, ventured to place himself in the former's power ? And how was it that Pescara spared and recommended him ? To attribute conscientious scruples to the marquis would be a sheer absurdity. He had never been possessed of any, and there was no reason for his conceiving any then, if he had never had them before. It would be still more impossible to imagine that scruple or any similar motive could serve to explain the conduct of De Leyva, Bourbon, or

* Besides the various works from which we have quoted, we may refer the reader to a careful monograph on Morone, by Signor G. E. Saltini, of the Florence Archives, published in the *Archivio storico italiano*, series iii. vol. viii. part i. pp. 59-126, of the year 1868.

Charles V. himself, for they had held out no promises, and were not called upon to show any tenderness towards a conspirator. Morone was never credited with patriotism by the contemporaries who knew him, nor even by those who urged him to join the conspiracy. Guicciardini, in his *History of Italy*, professes himself unable to comprehend the blindness prompting Morone to deliver himself into the hands of Pescara, whose cruelty and falsehood were so well known to him. But the same historian, on hearing of his imprisonment, wrote to Rome in one of his *Legazioni*: "I fear that by means of his weathercock policy (*girandole*), he will soon contrive to counsel and direct the imperialists to the hurt of the allies ;" * and so it fell out.

But although his contemporaries could only judge Morone by their personal knowledge of him, the documents that have been brought to light in our own day enable us to see more clearly how matters really went. Morone, who had served many masters, and was quite ready to serve more, was studying how to gain additional power under the Duke of Milan, when the plan of the league and the offer of the Neapolitan kingdom to Pescara, were communicated to him from Rome. Both league and war harmonized with the real interests of Italy, with a need that, if not strongly felt, was still very generally understood by the Italians. Had Pescara really promoted the enterprise it might have achieved success, and by its success both he and Morone would

* Guicciardini, *Opere inedite*, vol. viii. p. 331, letter of the 23rd October, 1525, dated from Faenza.

have become very powerful personages. Therefore the proposal was made and accepted on the tacit and reciprocal understanding that, should it prove impossible to attain the desired end, both would again devote themselves to the Emperor's cause. As we have seen, Morone had proved this by his deeds, when the Duke seemed to be at the point of death. Pescara, who had likewise gone very far, had also secured his own safety by revealing everything to Charles V. He had remained a member of the conspiracy, making his colleagues furnish supplies for the maintenance of the army, and had gone on in the increasing belief that, if manipulated by himself and the imperialists, Morone would prove an excellent instrument for the conquest of Italy, directly he, too, should realize the impracticability of the plot. Besides, as events afterwards showed, Morone was specially adapted to point out from whom most money could be extorted in Italy, and the imperialists were so constantly in need of funds as to frequently find themselves on the point of having to disband their troops. Morone, too, was very wealthy, and might furnish supplies from his own pocket, as he afterwards furnished them to De Bourbon.

Accordingly, when Pescara had him in his grasp, he subjected him to trial rather as a matter of form and for the extortion of money, or in order to have a slight pretext for seizing Lombardy, than in the hope of obtaining any new disclosures. His unusual benignity, and his recommendation of him to the Emperor, were certainly dictated by his desire to win for the imperial cause the co-operation of one who had avowed himself

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ready to serve it, and who might prove to be of the highest utility.

This conspiracy, therefore, teaches us that the idea of making Italy achieve her independence by means of her own resources, was present to many minds, and might have been accomplished could any great and valiant leader have been found to carry it out by force of arms. For, although Italy was weak, her enemies were at war with one another, and so disorganized that they were often on the point of being destroyed almost without being beaten. But the required leader was not forthcoming. At decisive moments every one sought to act on his own account, and all genuine combination of forces became an impossibility. This idea of national independence, although so often discussed from the days of Julius II., was then welcomed by the Italians rather from literary enthusiasm, and for the forwarding of local or personal interests, than from any general and strongly felt need of a common country. Therefore it was impossible for it to lead to any great and durable result. Even Machiavelli himself had no clear perception of the idea, so long as he was secretary to the Republic, and indeed showed himself ready to sacrifice everything to the interests of his own little city. But once out of office he was the only man to discern this idea, and to realize it intensely without hesitation or dubiety of purpose. He then expounded it with lofty eloquence, and sought to convert others to the same faith. Accordingly, from that time forward his energies were spent in passing from illusion to illusion, from

hope to hope, doomed to behold the fading of the dreams by which he was unceasingly dominated. But we have no reason to believe that he ever cherished the most transient illusion as to the conduct of Morone, although the conspiracy might almost seem to have been inspired by the *Prince* and the *Discourses*. No one of the participators in it, had a shade of the energetic and honest patriotism which Machiavelli knew to be the most essential requirement for the execution of the great idea.

CHAPTER XV.

The advance of the imperial army into Lombardy—Guicciardini as President of Romagna, and as Lieutenant at the camp—Machiavelli's return to public life—His journey to Rome—His mission to Guicciardini at Faenza—His journey to Venice—His correspondence with Guicciardini—His nomination as chancellor of the *Procuratori della Mura*—His superintendence of the works for the fortification of the city.

THE imperial army now in possession of the duchy of Milan, and commanded by Constable de Bourbon, was confidently preparing for its onward march, and fresh events still more fatal to Italy had become inevitable. Upon these events the attention of Italian politicians was now concentrated, for all were in one way or another concerned in them. Even Machiavelli was again drawn into the vortex of public business, and was frequently despatched to the camp of the allies, where he found Guicciardini established as the Pope's Lieutenant. These two Florentines exerted all their energy, all their skill, and fruitlessly displayed the best points of their respective characters. But Machiavelli being already advanced in years and near to his death, still in a subordinate position, and in the service of a State that was itself dependent on the caprice of a Pope, could do little more than manifest the excellence of his intentions, his

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ardent patriotism and his grief for the unhappy fate of his country. Guicciardini, on the other hand, was in his prime and invested with very high authority ; so for him this proved the most splendid phase of his political career. He had a representative in Rome in the person of Messer Cesare Colombo, to whom he constantly sent despatches, of which the contents were to be communicated to the Pope and the Sacred College. These despatches give us a faithful portraiture of the events of the time, and bear emphatic testimony to the breadth of his political intelligence and his excellence as a statesman.

Having been sent as governor in Emilia, he had won much applause by his great energy and promptitude during the war in that part of Italy. Accordingly, in 1524, he was nominated President of Romagna, with the mission of pacifying a province long torn by party strife, and stained by continual crimes. His intention was to first terrify the guilty by rigorous measures, and then rule with clemency. But after insisting on the infliction of capital punishment in the case of a criminal, "plunged up to his eyes in guilt," he discovered that he had to face far greater difficulties than he had expected.* The malefactors appealed to the Pope for protection, had themselves recommended to mercy and obtained safe-conducts. This quickly caused an increase of crime, and weakened the authority of the President, who became irritated and alarmed."† A certain Bastiano Orsello,

* *Opere inedite*, vol. viii. p. 28, letter of 1st June, 1524.

† *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 66 and fol., letter of 12th July.

who had killed his grandfather, and was accused of having committed sixteen or eighteen murders during a riot, as well as innumerable acts of rapine, obtained the protection both of Giovanni de' Medici and the Pope.* And while Guicciardini complained of one criminal, another was pardoned, so that he was driven to exclaim in disgust : "It were better to acquit all the assassins and beg them to commit worse crimes ! By heaven, this has been a fine caprice ! Murderers have been seen at large, who had played at ball with their victims' heads in the public squares of Forlì."† Yet he was able to profit by the graver anxieties that assailed the Pope, and carry out his own measures in such fashion that by the close of the year he could boast of having established order in Romagna.‡

He then turned his attention to the events taking place outside Romagna, giving decisions and counsels of so much justice and truth that they may sometimes be regarded in the light of prophecies. Shortly before the battle of Pavia, he declared it to be his opinion that the imperialists would prevail.§ And when his words were verified, he added : "Henceforth everything will turn to our disadvantage. The Italians are not strong enough for resistance, and capitulation will bring about our en-

* *Opere inedite*, vol. viii. pp. 66 and 100, letters of the 12th July and 7th September.

† *Ibidem*, vol. viii. pp. 121 and 123, letter from Forlì of 7th and 8th September.

‡ *Ibidem*, vol. viii. pp. 126 and 153, letters of the 12th October and 28th November.

§ *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 171, letter of the 19th January, 1525.

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slavement.* This would be the moment for daring designs, and I should applaud him who would adopt a course with prospects equal to its perils.† It is vain to hope for aught from the French, who take no thought for the morrow and will be ready to consent to everything for the sake of releasing their king. I well understand that just now every good brain is puzzled ; but he who sees that by standing still he will be overwhelmed by destruction, ought to prefer the worst dangers to certain death.”‡ And upon hearing of the capture of Morone, whom he had never trusted, he wrote : “ Now the imperialists will delay no longer. They will perhaps decide on taking instant possession of the Milanese duchy, and probably succeed in doing so through the weakness of the duke, or by some fresh turn on the part of Morone. And we have nothing to hope for, because they will push still farther on to occupy the States of the Church, or to overthrow the Florentine State, or to do even worse should they find the opportunity. The Emperor wishes to be master of Italy, and can never be the friend of any one likely to prove an obstacle to that purpose. It is vain to hope for aught from a treaty with France, who is now prostrate, for it would always be to our hurt. No treaty could be durable without the release of the king, who would observe no conditions that should prove to his disadvantage. The truth is that Cæsar will accomplish his purpose while the others are

* *Opere inedite*, vol. viii. p. 201, letter from Forlì, of 25th March, 1525.

† *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 246, letter from Ravenna, of 28th May, 1525.

‡ *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 257, letter from Faenza, 15th June, 1525.

slumbering ; and so he will prevail over all, not by superior strength, but by the *fatali omnium ignavia*.* These words seem to clearly foretell the progress of the Imperialists towards the sack of Rome and the siege of Florence. Nor did Guicciardini alter his opinion on learning that an imperial envoy was proposing terms, and that the Pope was in treaty with him. "The Emperor," he wrote, "seeks to crush France and the Venetians, and must first therefore assure himself of the Pope, and this he will do as soon as he has completed the Milanese business. In any case he will become the arbiter of Italy. The Pope will be a sovereign in name only, and will for the present be mocked with plans that will end in smoke.† But I have the greatest fear that he will adopt the most unworthy course. Those that dread war should be shown the perils of peace. Over-prudence is now imprudence, and it is no longer possible to undertake measured enterprises. It is indispensable to resort to arms to avoid a peace that makes us slaves."‡ And this even was verified. War became inevitable, and Guicciardini was called to Rome, to be first asked for his advice and then despatched to the camp as Lieutenant-General. He then entrusted the government of Romagna to his brother Jacopo, leaving him long and minute written instructions that are additional proofs of his aptitude as a ruler.§

Now at last the moment had come for Machiavelli's reappearance upon the political stage. We find him still

* *Opere inedite*, vol. viii. p. 321, letter of 23rd October, 1525.

† *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 360, letter of 11th December, 1525.

‡ *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 366, letter of 24th December.

§ *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 393 and fol.

of the same temper ; still buffeted by fortune ; occupying very modest posts, exalted by vivid enthusiasm for his Italian motherland, and striving vainly to save it ; always dominated and transported by his constant ideals. These ideals of his that so often made his contemporaries regard him as a fantastic visionary, now seem to us almost sublime and prophetic, exactly because they are more in sympathy with our own than with his time, and evidencing rather a penetrative intuition of the future, than a practical knowledge of the present. Guicciardini, on the other hand, whose main gift lay in practical knowledge of the present, had better fortune and greater power. Colder than Machiavelli, impassible and calculating, he might well have addressed his great contemporary in the words applied by Dante to Farinata degli Uberti :—

E' par che voi veggiate, se ben odo,
Dinanzi quel che il tempo seco adduce,
E nel presente tenete altro modo.*

And Machiavelli appears to have been sometimes made aware of the contradictory conditions by which he was surrounded, while forcing himself to believe his contemporaries and his country—whose defects he so clearly recognized—far better than they really were and capable of heroic resolves. Then, in his discouragement he would suddenly give vent to his satiric, biting, and cynical spirit, and indulge in unexpected, irresistible outbursts. But before long he always reverted to his ideal theories, to which he clung with unshaken faith down to the last hour of his life.

* *Inferno*, Canto x., lines 97–99.

In the early part of 1525, before the tide of fresh calamity had risen to its height, he was gloomily meditating on the news of the day, and finishing the eighth book of his *Histories*, which comes down to the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent. It was his desire to present it in person to the Pope, to whom it was dedicated, in the hope of thus obtaining some pecuniary help towards its continuation. He mentioned the matter in a letter to Vettori, who, however, gave him very little encouragement. Nevertheless, on the 8th of March, Vettori wrote from Rome to say that the Pope had made inquiries of him concerning the *Storie*, and that he had replied that he had read part of the work and thought that it would give satisfaction. He had also said that he had discouraged Machiavelli from coming to offer it in person, because this did not seem to be a fitting moment. The Pope's answer, however, was : he ought to come, and I am sure that his books will please and be eagerly read. Nevertheless, Vettori, with his usual frigidity, ended his letter by saying : "Yet you must not deceive yourself, for even if you came, you might be left empty-handed in times like the present." *

After much hesitation, Machiavelli at last determined to visit Rome, and not only found the Pope well disposed towards him, but that even Filippo Strozzi and Jacopo Salviati were readier to give him practical help than Vettori, who was only lavish of his words. Salviati in fact had already endeavoured to find some post for him ;

* *Carte del Machiavelli*, case v. No. 34, letter of the 8th March, 1524-25, Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xiii.

but without success, as the Pope had not been pleased by the proposal.* Filippo Strozzi was more fortunate. By means of Francesco del Nero, he was able to inform Machiavelli, who had already left Rome, that his Holiness was willing to give him a fresh subsidy, in order that he might go on with his *Histories*.† In fact, the subsidy was afterwards granted him, and consisted of another hundred ducats.‡

The real reason why, notwithstanding the Pope's affability, Machiavelli left Rome without concluding anything to his own advantage, and even before being assured of the promised sum for the *Histories*, is one that reflects much honour upon his character. Arriving in Rome after the battle of Pavia, when the minds of all Italians were held in suspense by the imminent danger of the imperial army taking the offensive at any moment, he almost immediately renounced all

* Letters of the 3rd and 17th May, 1525, written by Salviati to his son the Cardinal. The first tells him of the proposal to send Machiavelli with him to Spain; the second says: "We must not count upon having "Niccolò Machiavelli, for I see that the Pope takes but slowly to that "idea." Desjardins, *Négociations diplomatiques*, vol. ii. pp. 840, 841.

† Letter of Francesco del Nero, dated 27th July, 1525. It is among the *Carte del Machiavelli*, case v., No. 45. *Vide* Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xiv. It begins thus: "Io ebbi una vostra da Roma, ad laquale feci risposta." This proves the fact of Machiavelli's visit to Rome at this period, seldom noted by other writers. Further proofs are also to be found in the letters that we have already quoted.

The undated letter mentioned on page 50 of this volume might be supposed to have been written by Marietta on this occasion, but from the fact of her mentioning a new-born boy and a little girl still in her babyhood. Besides, Marietta seemed to allude to a long absence on the part of her husband, and on this occasion he made a very short stay in Rome.

‡ *Opere*, vol. viii. pp. 177-181, Machiavelli's letter to Guicciardini, without date.

thought of his personal interests, and left his friends to attend to them. He only spoke to the Pope of the best measures to be adopted in the present state of affairs, and of how to fortify Florence against any unexpected attack. To him, to the cardinals, and to all whom he met at the Court, he earnestly expounded his old idea of the national militia, trying to convince every one that the only efficacious remedy would now be to arm the people, and summon them to the defence of their country against the foreigners that threatened it. And he spoke with so much heat and eloquence, that he at last succeeded in convincing the Pope and a few of those about him. In fact, in the June of the same year, he was sent with a Brief to Guicciardini in Romagna, to explain his design, and try to carry it into effect there, where the people were well used to bear arms. Jacopo Salviati and Schonberg spoke of the plan to Colombo, begging him also to write to Guicciardini on the matter. And the latter, who was perhaps the coolest and most practical head in Italy at that period, wrote the following reply from Faenza on the 15th June, 1525: "I have noted what is said about the coming of Machiavelli. I shall await his arrival, in order to comprehend his design, before giving my opinion; for it is a matter requiring much consideration, and so you must also tell the others. Meanwhile, inquire into the Pope's object in making this proposal, for if he intends it as a remedy for present dangers, it is a measure that cannot be executed in time." *

* *Opere inedite*, vol. viii. p. 263.

On the 19th he wrote that Machiavelli had arrived and had explained the scheme of the Ordinance. "Certainly, if this thing could be carried to the desired end, it would be one of the most useful and praiseworthy works that his Holiness could undertake. And I should not be afraid of giving arms to the people, for with a few good regulations and severe discipline everything could be managed; but I would not arm a population like that of these parts. For Romagna, being lacerated by cruel enmities, is split into two great factions, still known by the denominations of Guelphs and Ghibelines, the former relying on France, the latter on the Empire. The Church has no true friends in either party, and therefore were she at war with the Emperor, would be in great danger through having armed his friends, in the hope of employing them to her own advantage. This enterprise would have to be founded on the love of the people, and the people of Romagna have not the slightest love for the Church. Here there is no security either for life or property, and therefore men look to foreign princes, upon whom all depend in this province. And to hope to compose the Militia Ordinance, according to Machiavelli's desire, of men independent of either of the two factions, would be equal to composing it of none. Nevertheless, if the thing is to be attempted at all risks, I will throw myself into it heart and soul, and so, too, should his Holiness, for once started it would have to be made of more importance than anything else." He then went on to say, that the Pope's idea of burdening the already ex-

hausted Communes with the expense of the project was most dangerous, and would only, from the outset, irritate them against an institution for which their sympathies would be required.*

On the 23rd June, he again wrote to express his doubts, invited Colombo to first communicate his letter to Schonberg and Salviati, making notes of their advice and opinions, and then show it to the Pope, while taking the greatest care to observe "his words and gestures."† However, at the same time that he was so doubtful about seeing the Pope plunge without reflection or energy into so uncertain a scheme, Clement's enthusiasm had already burnt out as quickly as a blaze of straw, and all the quicker when he found that it would involve expenditure of his own funds. He did not even take the trouble to send a reply. Accordingly, Machiavelli, after vainly waiting for letters until the 26th July, became persuaded that neither Guicciardini nor the Pope had the courage to arm the people, and unwilling to waste any more time, went back to Florence stating that he should there await their commands.‡

He wrote Guicciardini several letters from Florence, but nothing more was said respecting the Ordinance. The correspondence was devoted to private affairs and to the jests by which both sought to distract their minds from the present miseries of their country and the greater ills by which it was threatened. But it was

* *Opere inedite*, vol. viii. p. 266, letter cxxx. of the *Presidenza della Romagna*, the second dated 19th June, 1525, from Faenza.

† *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 270, letter cxxxi. of 23rd June.

‡ *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 287, letter cxxxix. of 26th July.

impossible for them to avoid all mention of these dangers, and they alluded to them with bitter pain. On the 17th August, Machiavelli said a word in reference to the proposed marriage of one of Guicciardini's daughters to a wealthy Florentine, expressed his satisfaction that his *Mandragola* should have given his friend so much pleasure as to make him wish to have it acted at Faenza during the following carnival, and promised to be present at the performance. He sent him a medicine, from which he said that he had often derived great benefit, especially when suffering from overwork. He added that he might soon have to go to Venice, in which case he should certainly stay at Faenza on his way back, in order to visit his friends.*

In fact, on the 19th August, Machiavelli was sent to Venice on business of slight importance, at the instance of the consuls of the Woollen Guild, and of the Florentine consuls in Roumania, also known as the Provveditori of the Levant. Certain Florentine merchants returning with much money from the East, on board a Venetian brigantine, found on their arrival in one of the ports of the Republic, that the vessel was in the power of one G. B. Donati, who accompanied the Turkish Orator. This Donati called the merchants together, and after behaving to them in a manner "too insulting for description, forced

* *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 167, letter lvii. As some writers have thought that Machiavelli's death was caused by abuse of this medicine, it is as well to say it was a mild purgative, and that Aloes—the only potent drug in it—was used in too small a proportion to do any injury. Mons. Artaud, author of *Machiavel, son génie et ses erreurs*, took the trouble to have the original prescription made up and found the pills to be very mild aids to the digestion.

"them to pay a ransom of 1500 gold ducats." * Accordingly, the consuls of the Guild now demanded compensation from the Serene Republic, on the ground that Donati was a Venetian subject. This mission was speedily executed, and the only documents that we have relating to it, consist of Machiavelli's credentials, his letters of instruction and the papers containing the statement of the case.† But we learn that a rumour was afloat in Florence at that time to the effect that Machiavelli had tempted fortune in Venice, and "won a prize of two or "three thousand ducats in the lottery." Filippo de' Nerli wrote to him on the subject, also adding that Machiavelli's name had been put on the list of citizens eligible for political employment, for as he had been recommended by some ladies who had a kindness for him, the Accoppiatori had shut an eye.‡ And he proceeded to cut jokes upon this topic, in a tone that is not very easy to understand at the present day. But we perceive that some favour had been shown to Machiavelli, inasmuch as he had never fulfilled all the conditions of eligibility rigorously demanded by the law concerning offices of the State.§ As regards his winnings in the lottery, they were either very insignificant or purely fictitious, for we find no allusion to them elsewhere,

* *Opere*, vol. vii. p. 454.

† *Ibidem*, vol. vii. pp. 450-455; *Opere* (P. M.), vol. vi. pp. 220-224.

‡ *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 171, letter lviii. from Florence, 6th September, 1525.

§ This may possibly be the reason of Ranke's belief that Machiavelli had not the rights of a citizen. He had not the so-called *honours*, the privilege of many, but not of all citizens.

and the sum of two or three thousand ducats was one that would have entirely changed Machiavelli's position, since he was never possessed of so much. And although Canossa, the Ambassador to Venice, saw him twice during his short stay, and gave news of him to Vettori, he made no allusion to the rumoured prize. He only wrote that Machiavelli and he had spoken on public matters, regarding which there was nought to say, "save that we are falling into slavery, or rather buying it. All are aware of this and no one tries to prevent it." *

On returning to Florence, apparently without having seen Guicciardini, who was then at Imola, Machiavelli found his son Bernardo ill, and a letter† awaiting him from his other son Lodovico, a very impetuous youth, who was always in hot water at Adrianople, where he was engaged in business. He now wrote thence to complain of a certain priest who would not give up a church in the patronage of the Machiavelli family near St. Andrea in Percussina. He threatened to come over and obtain justice for himself, unless his father could set things straight without delay. "I cannot see," he said in conclusion,‡ "why we should wait so long. It seems to be like putting out two of our own eyes in order to put out one of that fellow's."

To these petty worries was added the gravest anxiety

* Letter of the 15th September, 1525, *Carte del Machiavelli*, case v. No. 12, Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xv.

† *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 174, letter lix. without date.

‡ This is the letter already quoted elsewhere, of 14th August, 1525. *Vide* Appendix of the Italian edition, document i.

about public affairs. Morone was in prison, Pescara advancing on Milan, the Pope uncertain and irresolute as ever. The letters of Guicciardini and Machiavelli fluctuated between despair and an apparently cynical mirth, that was often the laughter of despair. In a letter bearing no date, Machiavelli sent his friend explanations of the meaning of certain Florentine expressions contained in the *Mandragola*. He promised to compose some new canzonets to be sung between the acts, and to send to Faenza the celebrated Barbera and her troop of singers.* In another letter, also undated and signed : *Niccolò Machiavelli, historic, comic, and tragic* author, he began by speaking at length of the marriage that Guicciardini had so much at heart ; and then, with a sudden change of subject, went on to say : " Morone "has been seized, and the duchy of Milan is done for ; "and just as that man waited to be snuffed out, so will "all the other princes wait for it,† nor is there any hope "of mending matters : *Sic datum desuper*. Veggo "*d'Alagna tornar lo fiordaliso*. *E nel vicario suo*, etc. "*Nosti versus coetera per te ipsum lege*."‡ And then,

* *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 174. The canzonets to which he refers, are not in fact included in the early editions of the play, but were only published at a much later date.

† That is, all our other princes, by passively waiting, will come to the same end.

‡ " Veggio in Alagna entrar lo fiordaliso

" E nel vicario suo Cristo esser catto.

(Dante, *Purgatorio*, xx. 86, 87.)

As all know, these verses allude to the imprisonment of Boniface VIII. The treatment of this Pope at the hands of the Colonna in Anagni (Alagna) really resembles, as we shall presently see, the behaviour of the same family to Clement VII. in Rome.

with another sudden change: "Let us have a merry "Carnival, and engage a lodging for the Barbera among "those friars, and if they do not lose their heads, I "won't take any payment, and recommend me to the "Maliscotta, and let me know how the arrangements "for the comedy are going on, and when you intend "to have it played. I have had that increase of a "hundred ducats for my *History*. Now I am beginning "to write again, and I vent my rage by accusing the "princes, who have done everything to bring us to this "pass." *

And the correspondence continued in this strain. Writing on the 19th December, Machiavelli recurred to the affair of the marriage, and to find a way of bringing it about, suggested that a sum of money should be obtained from the Pope to swell the maiden's dowry. Guicciardini, being a prouder and more practical man, hesitated about addressing Clement VII. on matters of that kind, when the States of the Church and all Italy were in so precarious a condition. Pescara was now dead, and the Italian potentates seemed disposed to slumber, no little to the increase of the general danger. Even Machiavelli concluded his letter by saying: Every one now feels reassured, "and believing that there is "plenty of time gives time to the enemy. And I end by "thinking that from this quarter there will never proceed "any noble or daring deed enabling us either to live or "die with honour, so great is the fear I discern in these

* *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 177, letter lx., undated, but written at the end of November or beginning of December, 1525.

"citizens, and so great their vileness, with respect to those who would devour us." *

Guicciardini replied on the 26th, and began his letter by fresh reference to the comedy, "for it seems to me by no means the least important of the matters in hand, and at any rate it is a practicable thing, being one in our own power, so that it is no waste of time to think of it, and recreation is more necessary than ever amid so much turmoil."

He did not know what to say on public affairs, seeing that every one disapproved of the only opinion that he held to be worth anything. "The evils of peace will be recognized when the opportunity for war is past. We alone persist in awaiting the coming storm in the open road, and we shall not be able to say that our power was torn from us, but that *turpiter elapsa sit de manibus*." †

It appears that Guicciardini and Machiavelli were not alone in trying to distract their thoughts by amusing themselves with comedies, but that all Italians, during these terrible years, sought diversion in carnival festivities. The Cazzuola company in Florence, which had shortly before given capital representations of the *Mandragola*, was now, in the carnival of 1525, performing the *Clizia* in the garden expressly laid out for that purpose by Jacopo Fornaciaio, near the S. Frediano gate. The scenery was painted by Bastiano da San Gallo, who in consequence of his skill in work of this kind was nick-

* *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 181, letter lxi.

† *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 183, letter lxii.

named Aristotle.* On this occasion so many grand festivities and banquets were offered to the nobles, burghers and working classes, that they were a subject of talk all over Italy. It seems that Machiavelli threw himself into these diversions with no less zest than the others;† and that Filippo de' Nerli, who had little affection for him, while ostensibly his friend, congratulated him upon his good spirits, although to others he professed himself to be much scandalized by Niccolò's conduct. Two private companies in Venice were at the same time giving performances respectively of the *Mandragola* and of the *Menæchmi* of Plautus. The latter work was so coldly received in comparison, that its actors invited the other company to their house to repeat the modern play.‡ And Machiavelli was pressed by the

* Vasari, *Vita dei Pittori*, the Le Monnier edition, vol. xi. p. 204, in the *Vita di Aristotele da San Gallo*, and vol. xii. p. 16, in the *Vita di Giovan Francesco Rustici*.

† In one of his letters to Machiavelli, dated from Modena, 22nd February, 1525, and published in the *Opere* (P.M.), vol. i. p. 91, he congratulated him with a great show of affection, and styled him *Carissimo et come fratello honorando*. In another written to Francesco del Nero on the 1st March of the same year, he, on the contrary, professed to be vastly scandalized at the amusements in which Machiavelli had indulged, and blamed him for so doing. *Vide* Appendix III. of the Italian edition, document xvi. The date being the 1st March, there may be some doubt as to the year; but from other letters written at that time by Nerli from Modena, it is plain that he did not date by the Florentine, but by the usual style. Therefore Passerini was mistaken in declaring that the letter in question was of the year 1526; it is of the year 1525. How could Machiavelli in the January of 1526 promise Guicciardini that he would go to Faenza to witness the performance of the *Mandragola*? He must at least have referred to the fact of his being obliged almost at the same moment to be present at the representation of the *Clizia* in Florence.

‡ See the letter of Giovanni Mannelli to Machiavelli, dated Venice, 28th February, 1525, in the *Opere* (P.M.), vol. i. p. 90. In this instance,

Florentine merchants in Venice to send them another work from his pen to be brought out in the following May. The performance organized in Romagna by Guicciardini for the carnival of 1526,* seems never to have taken place, in consequence of the President being obliged to make a hasty journey to Rome. The news of the treaty arranged between France and Spain for the release of the king, although upon what conditions nothing was as yet precisely known, kept men's minds in greater suspense than before, and it was necessary to be prepared for emergencies.

The letters of the two friends now began to dwell upon this news with greater persistence. Guicciardini, as we have seen, had long been of the opinion that the Emperor would release the king, but that in no case would the latter remain faithful to the agreed terms. Machiavelli, on the contrary, clung to the erroneous belief that the king would not be liberated, but that in any case he

also, Passerini believes the year to be indicated according to the Florentine style; but the matter is doubtful at the least. It is certain that when away from their own State, the Florentines sometimes computed the years in their own style, and sometimes according to that of the place of their abode.

* It is clear from Machiavelli's letters, that he had absolutely promised to go, but after all did not go. On the 3rd January, 1525-6, he wrote: "I will come at any rate, nor shall anything but illness, from which may God preserve me, keep me away; and I will come after the end of this month, at any time you may appoint." He added that the Barbera was detained by certain lovers, but that nevertheless he hoped to be able to send her. *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 185, letter lxiii. This letter is followed by that of the 15th March, from which we learn that, "The Barbera is now there; if you can be of any service to her, I recommend her to your good offices, for she gives me far more anxiety than the Emperor." Guicciardini was in Rome at that moment, as we learn from his *Opere inedite*. The Barbera had probably gone there for other performances and in search of adventures.

would remain true to his word. And even after the news of the treaty was generally known, he found it difficult to change his mistaken views. He wrote to Filippo Strozzi on the subject, and also on the 15th March to Guicciardini, saying that his head was confused by this treaty, and repeating that either the king would not be released, or would observe the conditions demanded of him. "It is true that in this way he would cause the ruin of Italy, and might even be exposed to the loss of his kingdom;" but having, as you say, a French brain, this dread would not affect him as it would affect another. And whether he be released or not, there will be war in Italy all the same. For us two ways only are open; either to throw ourselves on the mercy of the victor and furnish him with money, or to fly to arms. The former course is not satisfactory, for the enemy would first take our money and then our life; accordingly there is nothing left for us but to fight. At this point Machiavelli indulges in another of the daring ideas that were so entirely his own.

"I shall now say something that you will think madness; I shall suggest a design that you will consider either foolhardy or ridiculous; nevertheless, these times demand audacious, unusual, and strange resolves. And every one who knows how to reason of this world is aware that the people is changeable and foolish; nevertheless, taking it just as it is, it may often be said to do that which it should do. There were rumours in Florence a few days ago that Signor Giovanni de' Medici was collecting a company of adventurers to make war

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"wherever it best suited his liking. This news set me "thinking that the people was teaching us that which "ought to be done. I hold it to be the general belief, "that there is no leader in Italy whom soldiers would "more willingly follow, nor of whom the Spaniards could "have greater fear and respect. Likewise every one holds "Signor Giovanni to be daring, impetuous, full of grand "ideas, and disposed to adopt great decisions. It might "therefore be possible, by secretly gaining him recruits, "and the greatest possible number of horses and foot- "soldiers, to enable him to raise an army." "This might speedily disturb the Spaniards' brains and force them to change the plans by which they hope to be able to destroy Tuscany and the Church without encountering any obstacles. It might even change the mind of the king, for it would show him that he had to deal with living men. And mark this, that if the king be not stirred by living things and by force, he will observe the treaty and leave you to your fate, for you have too often been against him, or remained passive spectators, for him not to fear that the same might befall him this time likewise." *

Filippo Strozzi showed the Pope the letter he had received from Machiavelli, and also spoke to him of the proposal contained in that addressed to Guicciardini. But these ideas were too daring, too patriotic to win acceptance from Clement VII., who was bewildered by the mere mention of them. He replied that the king would soon be released, and would be faithful to the

* *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 188 and fol., letter lxiv., of 15th March, 1525-6.

prescribed terms, so that Italy would be left at the Emperor's mercy. He refused to entertain the proposal of arming Giovanni de' Medici, on the ground that this would be equivalent to openly declaring war against the Emperor. In fact, Giovanni de' Medici could not raise an army without money, and if that were furnished by the Pope, the latter would at once become the virtual head of the enterprise.* And thus in the same way that nothing had come of the Ordinance, so nothing came of the ex-Secretary's new plan.

Accordingly Machiavelli now devoted himself to studying the means of fortifying the walls of Florence, a subject upon which he had held a long conversation in Rome with the Pope, who recommended him to construct works of sufficient strength to encourage the people to believe that they could withstand any attack. But he urged the construction of an entirely new circle of walls on the San Miniato side, and this was an impossibility on account of the hill of that name. In order to include it within the new walls, too wide and consequently too indefensible a circuit would have been required. If, on the other hand, the existing circuit were to be narrowed, a whole quarter of the city would be left outside the defences. It would entail severe loss to demolish this quarter ; yet if left standing it would be instantly seized and fortified by the enemy.† Accordingly Machiavelli, after carefully inspecting the walls in the company of

* *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 193, letter lxxv., of Filippo Strozzi, from Rome, the last day of March, 1526.

† *Ibidem*, vol. viii. p. 199, letter lxxvii., to Francesco Guicciardini, and dated Florence, 4th April, 1526.

Pietro Navarro, drew up a detailed and accurate report, pointing out the works required, insisting still more urgently than before on the expediency of only fortifying the existing walls by means of additional towers, fortalices, ditches and other defences.* On the 17th May he wrote to Guicciardini, who was still in Rome, saying that his head was "so full of bastions" that he could think of nothing else. He told him how a law had been passed in Florence for the formation of a new board of magistrates to superintend the fortifications; and that if matters went on in the way expected, he, Machiavelli, would be the new chancellor. He begged that the Pope might be pressed to begin furnishing the money needed for the commencement of the works. Then, after alluding to the intelligence received from France touching the dangers to which the Pope had been exposed, and to the last news from Lombardy of the disorders in the imperial army, he concluded by remarking that all these things clearly showed "how easy it would be to rid Italy of those wretches. For Heaven's sake, do not let this opportunity slip. Remember that bad counsellors and worse ministers had, virtually, imprisoned not the king but the Pope, and that he is only just released. And now the Emperor, on finding the king fail him, will make propositions to which you ought to turn a deaf ear. We must no longer think of trusting to time and fortune, since both are deceitful. We must act. To you there is no need to say more.

* *Opere*, vol. iv. pp. 459-468. This report is highly praised by Major Jahns, in the essay on Machiavelli, to which we have so frequently referred.

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*Liberate diuturna cura Italiam. Extirpate has immanes belluas, quæ hominis præter faciem et vocem nihil habent.**

Guicciardini replied that he entirely agreed with him, and that things were now so plain that he trusted that decided measures would be taken. Yet this was not the case. Both in great things and small, the Pope was always a prey to the same uncertainty, so that even the matter of fortifying the walls of Florence could be brought to no conclusion. To the last he obstinately clung to his own impracticable project that every one else had condemned.

The new Florentine decree for the institution of the *Five Curators of the Walls*, drawn up by Machiavelli himself, was approved by the Council of the Hundred on the 9th May, 1526, and on the 18th the curators were elected, and immediately chose Machiavelli as their chancellor and *provveditore*.† Accordingly, aided by one of his sons and another person,‡ he at once began to dictate letters and give orders for the commencement of the works. The different mayors were instructed to furnish labourers for digging the trenches ; a letter was

* *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 201, letter lxviii.

† The minute autograph of this decree is in the Florence Archives and was published in the *Opere* (P. M.), vol. vi. p. 360. There is also the register of the election of the Five *Procuratori* ; but their *Atti* being missing, the date of Machiavelli's nomination is left in uncertainty. But a few official letters are still extant, contained in a packet of sixteen sheets. These letters are carried down to the 26th February, 1527. The first eleven are in Machiavelli's handwriting, but not so the remaining thirty.

‡ This other person had charge of the money and papers. *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 202, letter lxviii., dated 17th May, 1526.

sent to ask money from the Pope, since it was impossible at this juncture to impose fresh burdens on the citizens. He was also requested to hasten the arrival of Antonio da San Gallo, who had already gone to Lombardy to study the fortifications there, since it would hardly be advisable to begin new works before the engineers were agreed as to the design for the construction of the bastions.* But this was the very point that could not be decided, inasmuch as the Pope still adhered to his strange idea of enlarging the circuit of the walls, so that it might include the whole of the San Miniato hill ; and pretended that the increased value of the ground thus added to the city would bring in a profit of 80,000 ducats. Machiavelli almost lost patience, and on the 2nd June he despatched three letters to Guicciardini, saying in conclusion : "this is all nonsense, nor does the Pope know what he is saying."† And he hotly urged Guicciardini to overcome the Pope's obstinacy, since otherwise nothing would be done but weaken the city and waste a large sum of money. The end of it was that matters were delayed without any work of consequence being completed. When the moment came for measures of practical utility, the enemy was already so near at hand, that Machiavelli was compelled to make repeated journeys to the camp to see Guicciardini,

* *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 197, letter lxvi. It is an official letter written to the Florentine ambassador in Rome, and is also published in vol. iv. of the same *Opere*, p. 467. See also Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xvii.

† *Ibidem*, vol. viii. pp. 203-207. Letters lxx., lxxi., lxxii., of the 2nd June, 1526.

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and therefore to frequently interrupt and resume his labours.* Henceforward all that could be hoped was to find some way of turning aside from Florence the threatening storm that was rapidly drawing near, and to which no effectual resistance could be opposed.

* The Bargagli codex, so frequently quoted by us, contains a letter dated 15th January, 1526, from the Podestà of Montespertoli to Machiavelli, *provisor murorum*, in answer to the latter's requisition of twenty-five or thirty men to work at the trenches.

CHAPTER XVI.

Attack of the Colonna upon Rome—Truce between the Pope and Emperor—Guicciardini and Machiavelli at the camp—Cremona surrenders to the League—Guicciardini receives orders to withdraw the army across the Pò—The imperial forces advance on Bologna—Unsuccessful attempt to conclude an agreement between the Pope and the Emperor—Machiavelli returns to Florence—Rioting in Florence—The sack of Rome—Expulsion of the Medici, and re-establishment of the Florentine Republic.

THE Emperor had now only to push forward his army in order to become absolute master of Italy. But he was totally penniless, and the country, although weak and divided, was entirely hostile to him. Francis I. was now at liberty, and having decided not to observe the conditions imposed upon him, was making ready for war. For all these reasons it was of the highest importance to Charles V. to obtain the neutrality, if not the friendship, of the Pope. Cardinal Colonna, a better soldier than he was a prelate, and the bitter enemy of Clement VII., had offered to seize his person ; and the Emperor had sent Don Ugo di Moncada to Rome, commissioned first to attempt a truce, and should he fail to conclude it, to then give Colonna leave to do what he chose. In fact Don Ugo could arrange nothing, for

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Rome was aware of the straits to which the imperial forces were reduced. Accordingly, he indignantly departed on the 20th June, leaving full powers to Colonna, who proceeded to act without delay. At the head of eight hundred knights, three thousand foot-soldiers, and a few pieces of artillery drawn by oxen, he so quickly forced his way into the Eternal City, that Clement VII. had barely time to fly with his Swiss guards, and take refuge in the Castle of St. Angelo. The Vatican, St. Peter's, the palaces of the cardinals were sacked, and in a few hours the spoils reached the amount of 300,000 ducats. Here was at once a fatal example given to the Imperialists on the march from Lombardy; but the Cardinal wished to proceed to the further extremity of laying his hands on the person of the Pontiff. In his alarm, Clement appealed to Moncada, who had re-entered Rome at the heels of the riotous invaders, and who immediately came forward as mediator, and dictated the following conditions of peace:—a four months' truce with the Emperor, the withdrawal of the Papal fleet from Genoa, of the Papal forces from Lombardy, and full amnesty to the Colonna. The Cardinal and his men withdrew to Grottaferrata, frantic with rage, and declaring that they were all betrayed; while the Pope, on his side, accepted the forcibly imposed terms, but determined to violate them at the first opportunity. Of this Don Ugo was quite aware, but was content to gain time for the present. He therefore went to Naples, taking with him as hostage, Filippo Strozzi, a kinsman of the Medici. At

the same time, the Pope had to submit to another humiliation. In order, as he alleged, to protect the rear of his army in Lombardy, he had sent a few of his people, together with a multitude of Florentine rabble, to overthrow the government of Siena. But the Sienese put them to hasty and shameful flight before they had even attempted to come to blows.

And, as the climax of disaster, all these different news, together with the order to retreat across the Pò, reached the Pontifical camp at the moment when, after so many reverses, there seemed to be a dawn of better luck. For until then things had gone very badly there. The Venetians, led by the Duke of Urbino, did not cross the Adda ; the expected Swiss did not arrive ; and meanwhile the army of landsknechts was increasing in Tirol, under the command of the Protestant Frundsberg, who declared his intention of going to Rome to hang the Pope, and pawned his own estates to pay the Emperor's soldiers. In Milan a revolt against the Spaniards had been instantly suppressed, without the allies venturing to do anything, although they might have sent twenty thousand men to support the attempt. Finally, many Swiss arrived in small detachments, without any regular contract having been made with the Cantons ; but even with these reinforcements, the Duke of Urbino refused to take the field. He desired to have the sole command of the army, complained of everything, and decided on nothing. After making a feint of marching on Milan, in obedience to the general wish, he halted by the way, sending troops to besiege Cremona. He thus prevented

the army from despatching assistance to Doria, who had blockaded Genoa, and who declared that he could take the city, were it also invested by land.

Guicciardini was the Pontifical Lieutenant in the camp, and he was continually writing to Rome to animate the Pope's courage ; he did his utmost to keep the army in order, to conciliate the duke and incite him to action ; but all was in vain. When he thought that he had persuaded that inert leader to march upon Milan, he saw him turn aside for the useless siege of Cremona. When he hoped that the Pope was really dedicating his whole energies to the war, he received news of the negotiations for peace. "What a charge is mine," he then exclaimed ; "how shameful it were to lose heart at the first difficulties, now, too, that the army is unbroken, that no disorders have taken place, and that we have our foot in the enemy's country." * This was the moment of Niccolò Machiavelli's arrival in the camp. The Florentines being consumed by anxiety for the fate of their city, had sent him to examine and report how things were going on. On the road he had received letters from Vettori giving him details of the shameful affair at Siena. "I can believe," so wrote Vettori, "that other armies may have been put to flight by shouts, but has any one ever seen or read of an army having fled ten miles without a single pursuer ! Everything is going to ruin now. When I see how ill things fare at Milan, Cremona and Genoa, how utter was the failure of the expedition to Siena, it

* *Luogotenenza generale per il Papa Clemente VII.*, part i., letter of the 31st July, 1526, in the *Opere inedite*, vol. iv. p. 145.

seems to me that with such terrible ill-luck we cannot even succeed in forcing our way into an oven." *

On the 10th September Machiavelli was sent by Guicciardini to the camp before Cremona, in order to see for himself how things were going on, and to endeavour to persuade the Venetian Provveditore and the Duke of Urbino, that if they could not take the city within five or six days, it would be better to raise the siege altogether, and march instead to the attack of Milan and the assistance of Doria at Genoa.† He wrote one letter from Cremona,‡ and then returned without delay to report that no one was inclined to abandon the siege, which

* *Opere*, vol. viii. pp. 207-215. Letters lxxiii. and lxxiv., written by Vettori on the 5th and 7th August, 1526. While at the camp Machiavelli received other letters from Florence, among which, as though to prevent our forgetting his strangely contradictory character, is one from the same Jacopo Fornaciaio, who had given a performance of the *Clizia* in his own garden. This Jacopo wrote to him of the actress Barbera, concerning whom it would seem that Machiavelli was much occupied even in those times, telling him that she would write to him once a week, since he, Machiavelli, still took so much interest in her welfare. Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xviii.

* *Ibidem*, vol. vii. p. 456; *Opere inedite*, vol. iv. p. 340, letter of the 9th September, 1526.

† *Opere inedite*, vol. iv. p. 367. Guicciardini wrote to Roberto Acciaïoli that he had forwarded to the Pope Machiavelli's letter, "containing "the plan of those entrenchments *not* drawn by the hand of Leonardo de Vinci." I used to think that this *not* was a misprint, but it also exists in the autograph. Guicciardini frequently employed the word *not*, in an affirmative sense, as the following quotations will prove: "Il castello è in "pratica di accordo, e *non* ier l'altro fu a parlamento sì stretto, che si "tenne per fermo doversi concludere ieri con le condizioni, etc." *Ibidem*, vol. ix. p. 46. "Ma secondo gli avvisi che ho io per due persone, "che l'uno parti *non* ier l'altro, l'altro ieri." *Ibidem*, p. 79. And it is plain that if the plan had not been drawn by Leonardo, Guicciardini would have expressed himself differently. The design in question must have been made at an earlier period, for Leonardo was then deceased.

really seemed to be almost at an end. In fact, Cremona surrendered shortly after.

Consequently the army was now free. It numbered 20,000 Italians and 13,000 Swiss, without calculating 3500 others still expected from the Alps. The latter, however, were the regularly enlisted troops, namely, those that had to be paid, not those already in camp, many of whom daily deserted or dispersed. Nevertheless, the enemy was in inferior force and was without supplies. Some blow, therefore, might at last be struck. Instead, there came the astounding news of the truce and the orders to Guicciardini to withdraw the Papal contingent across the Pò. He was thunderstruck and wrote to the Datary :^{*} "I would rather forsake Italy, than live in Rome in the fashion our master will have to live there, if he goes on in the way you describe. We must not yield but resist it with all our might. How can Cardinal Colonna, with only a thousand men at his heels, have the power to reduce us to so wretched a state, and almost dictate terms to the whole world?"[†] But there was no longer any help for it, and it was necessary to submit. Giovanni de' Medici was now the only general in the pay of the Pope, still remaining in the field. He was engaged to maintain a body of 4000 foot soldiers and with secret orders to continue the war under colour of being paid by the French. But as a climax to all these ills, this valiant soldier was very dissatisfied with the treatment that he had

^{*} *Opere inedite*, vol. iv. pp. 393 and 397, letters of the 24th and 26th September, 1526.

[†] *Ibidem*, vol. iv. p. 397, letter of the 26th September, 1526.

received and threatened to desert to the enemy, unless he were given a State, according to the promises repeatedly made to him. "And he is quite capable of fulfilling his threat," said Guicciardini, in a letter from Piacenza.

As for the Duke of Urbino, he had been only too thankful to quit the camp, and instantly went home to his duchess. Meanwhile the force of landsknechts already collected at Botzen, and amounting to ten or twelve thousand men, were constantly increasing and were quite prepared to descend into Italy.*

Machiavelli then returned to Florence and wrote a report upon the state of affairs. In his judgment a whole string of blunders had been committed, beginning with the exaggerated confidence in the Milanese revolt which had been so promptly crushed by the Imperialists. Next, they had sent too small a force to besiege Cremona, and this mistake had led to much loss of time and prestige. The Pope had been unwilling to increase his funds by the nomination of new cardinals, and yet had found it impossible to obtain money by any other means. "He had remained in Rome and had let himself be seized as easily as a child, the which has brought things into such a tangle that no one can now unravel them, for he has even withdrawn his soldiery from the camp, and also Messer Francesco Guicciardini, who alone could cope with the infinite disorder. Now several captains are quarrelling so violently with one another that, in default

* *Opere inedite*, vol. iv., letters of the 2nd October to Roberto, Acciaiuoli and to the Datary, pp. 411 and 413; letter of the 19th October, p. 458; letter of the 7th November, p. 511; letter of the 9th November, p. 520.

of a leader, they will soon be like a pack of dogs, and consequently all affairs are terribly neglected." *

The Spanish fleet had sailed from the port of Carthage, under the command of Lannoy, the Viceroy of Naples, in order to give battle to Doria; and by November Frundsberg had already entered the province of Brescia, with more than twelve thousand landsknechts. Nevertheless, with the aid of the French galleys, commanded by Pietro Navarro, Doria was able to repulse the enemy by sea. Nor would it have been difficult to drive the landsknechts back to their mountains, inasmuch as they were still at a distance from the main body of the imperial army, and had neither artillery, money, nor provisions. But no one molested them, although the combined forces of the Duke of Urbino and Giovanni de' Medici amounted to 1600 horse and 19,000 foot. The Germans advanced slowly, and near Mantua were in the midst of the marshes and surrounded by hostile troops, but even then they were left unassailed. All this showed that the enslavement of Italy was now inevitable. Nevertheless, so bad was the condition of the imperial forces, that in all probability they might have disbanded even without being attacked, but for the arrival of unexpected succour. The Duke of Ferrara, possessor of the finest artillery of the period, was geographically qualified to

* This report is included in Machiavelli's printed correspondence, under the heading of "*a letter to a friend.*" *Opere*, vol. viii. pp. 215-219. But from its contents, its form, and from its having been found, as the editors remark, undated, unaddressed and unsigned, among the documents of the Segreteria Vecchia of Florence, we believe it to be no private letter, but an official report.

decide the fate of the war, and the Pope had committed the gross folly of offending, repulsing, and irritating him, at the moment when it was of supreme importance to secure his friendship. Accordingly, he furnished the Germans with money and a few pieces of artillery, which came at the moment when they were most needed. For Giovanni de' Medici, being weary of his forced inaction, began a skirmish with his own troops alone, and made a daring onslaught upon the enemy whom he believed to be unprovided with guns. But the second shot fired by them shattered his leg so seriously that five days afterwards he was dead. And thus the Pope was deprived of his only capable captain.

The truce was now practically at an end and the war already recommenced. Machiavelli returned in haste to the camp, to explain to the Lieutenant the wretched condition of Florence, which unless help were given would be totally unable to make any resistance to the enemy's attack.* But Guicciardini was obliged to reply that the forces of the League were so scattered, that even on an emergency it would be impossible for him to march more than six or seven thousand of the Papal infantry to the relief of the city. Accordingly the Florentines must make the best preparations in their power ; and in case they might decide on attempting to conclude peace, it were better that they or the Pope should treat directly with the Viceroy, upon whom, as the representative of the Emperor, all the others depended. And after com-

* *Opere*, vol. vii. pp. 459-461. *Istruzione degli Otto di Pratica al Machiavelli.*

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municating this news by letter, Machiavelli instantly made his way back to Florence.*

Meanwhile, bands of Germans and Spaniards were continually leaving Milan to join the landsknechts. The Constable de Bourbon did the same, after first using threats to Morone to extract more money from him, and then nominating him his counsellor. Thus the imperial forces had swelled to the number of 30,000, and on receiving a second supply of money and ammunition from the Duke of Ferrara, left Piacenza and set out towards Bologna. As for the Pope, he was still hesitating between peace and war. The Florentines promised him as much as 150,000 ducats, if he could succeed in concluding a fixed agreement that would deliver all Italy from the imminent danger. But although at one moment he began negotiations with the imperialists, at the next he sent his men across the Neapolitan frontier to attack them, and then again began to arrange terms, only to violate them directly they were concluded. Exactly as Guicciardini had foreseen and declared, the Emperor wished to lull the Pope to sleep in order to gain time to become master of Italy. His army was slowly making its way from the north, hindered by a thousand obstacles, by want of money, by continued outbreaks of disorder in the camp and by the inclemency of the season. And before long, it would have, in this state, to force a passage through the snow drifts of the Appennines.

* *Opere*, vol. vii. p. 464; letter of the 2nd December, from Modena, 1526.

Guicciardini was at Parma and repeatedly wrote to say that there was no means of inducing the Duke of Urbino to attack the enemy; he was either a great traitor, or a great coward; perhaps both.* In February Machiavelli came to him in great haste,† sent for the third time from Florence, to inform him that nothing was to be hoped from negotiation; that the city was quite unfitted to stand a siege, and earnestly begging that it might not be abandoned to the enemy.

Guicciardini led him to the duke at Casal Maggiore, to see if by their united efforts they could not spur him to action. But their prayers were in vain. The Duke would neither face, nor precede the enemy; he would only follow him at a distance.‡ There is every reason to think that he was not held back by cowardice alone,

* *Opere inedite*, vol. v. *Luogotenenza generale*, part ii., letters of December, 1526, and of January and February, 1527.

† *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 231, letter from Forlì, 16th April, 1527. In the State Archives of Modena (*Registri ducali*, compartment 1) there are duplicate copies of the letters of Filippo de' Nerli, who then governed Modena for the Pope. These letters also make reference to Machiavelli, and frequently betray Nerli's scanty liking for him, whom he styled "Il Machia." On the 7th October, 1525, Nerli wrote to Guicciardini: "Camurana, the bearer of the letter, will have supplemented it by explaining to your Lordship, that your least commands are more esteemed by me than all that may have been written by Alessandro del Caccia, especially as the latter in his letter quotes the authority of Il Machia." And on the 31st October, 1526, he wrote to the same: "The open letter sent by your Lordship, shall be forwarded to Machiavello by the next courier that passes, for, having to write myself at this time, I would not that this chatter should make the courier delay." These different letters show that Machiavelli was unweariedly travelling by day and night, sometimes alone and sometimes with an armed escort, backwards and forwards between the two hostile armies.

‡ *Opere inedite*, vol. v. p. 203, letter of the 7th February, 1527.

as was said and maintained by many; but probably by secret instructions from Venice, who seemed by no means unwilling to see the Pope crushed and humiliated, instead of becoming powerful and menacing through winning some victories. It is certain that Guicciardini was entirely justified in writing: "Here we do naught but predict and hold for certain every possible danger to ourselves, and every possible design on the part of the enemy, who, even could he read our thoughts, could never conceive the half of the projects we attribute to him." * Nevertheless, Guicciardini also assured Machiavelli that should the imperialists enter Tuscany, he would send the Papal troops on in advance, to cover Florence, even if the duke should persist in remaining in the rear.†

Machiavelli sent all this news to the Eight, and repeatedly wrote from Parma, that it was impossible to divine the enemies' intentions, since they did not seem to know them themselves. It would have been very easy to put them to flight, if the confusion of the League and the inaction of the Duke of Urbino had not ruined everything. And in March he wrote from Bologna, where he was staying with Guicciardini, to say that the imperialists were already close to the walls, had been assisted for the second time by the Duke of Ferrara, who was destined to be the arbiter of the war, and that they seemed resolved to invade Tuscany.‡ The hostile

* *Opere inedite*, vol. v. pp. 217 and 227, letters of the 9th and 15th February.

† *Ibidem*, vol. v. p. 203, letter of the 7th February.

‡ *Opere*, vol. vii. p. 471 and fol. These are the despatches of the third expedition to Guicciardini, which, in the *Opere*, are erroneously attributed to the second.

army demanded provisions and desired to enter Bologna ; but Guicciardini had only replied by closing the gates, and the imperialists had threatened him in vain and attempted to use violent means.

The Lieutenant was now engrossed, not only by the dangerous position of the Pope, but by the still more imminent peril to the city of Florence. To induce the Duke of Urbino to give it timely succour, he had assumed the grave responsibility of ceding to him the lands of San Leo which the Florentines had always promised but never given to him.* But fortunately the worst danger now seemed to be averted, by the imperial troops showing signs of marching straight upon Rome. Meanwhile there was increasing disorder in their ranks. Towards the middle of March there was a positive mutiny in the camp that lasted for several days, and the Constable de Bourbon was obliged to conceal himself to escape the fury of the men. Frundsberg, on the contrary, determined to face it, and on the 16th attempted to harangue his landsknechts ; but they replied by thrusting the points of their halberds in his face, and ferociously insisting upon immediate payment. The valiant captain was so highly enraged by this indignity that he was seized with an apoplectic attack ; he sank upon a drum and fell back a corpse. But even at that moment the Duke of Urbino refused to risk an attack.

Meanwhile, news arrived from Rome that a truce had been concluded between the Viceroy and the Pope. The latter was bound to restore the property of the Colonna ;

* *Opere inedite*, vol. v. p. 242 and fol., letter of the 20th February, 1527.



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to withdraw his troops from Naples ; to relinquish that kingdom to Charles V., Milan to Sforza, and to give 60,000 ducats to the Constable de Bourbon, who would thereupon withdraw his army from the States of the Church and even from Italy, provided that France and Venice should agree to the terms. The Romans were furious, for they had already flown to arms. But the Pope, who could no longer support the enormous expenses, and was most sparing of his money, only waited for the signing of the treaty by the Viceroy on the 25th March, and then instantly dismissed a considerable number of his soldiers in Rome, in order to save 30,000 ducats per month. Accordingly the city was left without means of defence, and the Constable, who had secret orders to continue his march, at once wrote to the Viceroy that 60,000 ducats was too small a sum for his army, which refused to accept the truce ; and that it would be useless for him or any one else to attempt to arrest its march. In fact, on the 31st March, he passed the river Reno near Bologna and started on his way south.

Guicciardini no longer knew either what to say, or what course to adopt ; and to increase his bewilderment, Morone now wrote to inform him, that if he could at once have the sum of 3000 ducats needed for the release of one of his sons who was held as a hostage, he would be ready to betray the imperialists, and thus throw them into the greatest confusion.* The Lieutenant

* Morone had been unable to pay the whole ransom exacted of 20,000 ducats. At the time of his release he still owed 6000 ducats, and left his son Antonio in pledge for their payment. Later, when the imperial army was much pressed for money, he contrived to obtain 3000 ducats more, but

knew his man too well to deem it worth while to send any reply. But he wrote to Rome, in a strain of the deepest melancholy, to express his conviction that it was a fatal error to think of a truce when they ought to be preparing for resistance. "I know not if necessity will at last dispel our uncertainties. Our foes demand of our Lord and of ourselves all that we possess, nor do they only assail temporal things; they likewise destroy the churches, profane the sacraments and introduce heresies into the faith of Christ. And if these things be not considered by him who can and ought to endeavour to remedy them, I hold him to be guilty of the same infamy and offence against God."* Machiavelli was writing to Florence in the same strain, and after announcing that the Pope wished to make the Florentines disburse the 60,000 ducats promised by him to the Imperialists, he added: "And we must find the money and make this last attempt to save our country. If the truce be really made, the money will gain us time and at least defer our destruction, and if the truce be not concluded, then it will help us to carry on the war."†

But it was already known in Florence that Bourbon had to leave his son Giovanni as hostage for them. For this reason, the Constable set Antonio at liberty, and released Morone from his bond for the remaining 3000 ducats promised by him. But his son Giovanni was still held in pledge for the sum that Morone now sought to fraudulently obtain from Guicciardini, in order, perhaps, to give it to the imperialists. *Vide* Dandolo, *Ricordi*, pp. 266, 267; *Opere inedite*, vol. v. p. 363, letter of the 26th March. In the *Storia d'Italia* (vol. ix. lib. xviii. ch. i. p. 25), Guicciardini also speaks of other practices that Morone "deceitfully and fraudulently" attempted to carry on with members of the League.

* *Opere inedite*, vol. v. p. 415, letter of the 19th April, 1527.

† *Opere*, vol. vii. p. 489, letter from Bologna, 23rd March, 1527.

had refused to accept the truce. When replying that the sum promised him was too small, he had not said how much more he should require. A messenger of his sent to the city, whither the Viceroy came expressly to meet him, made an agreement for 150,000 ducats, promising that the army should begin its retreat directly the first 80,000 ducats were paid. But the Constable had not yet given his formal consent to the bargain, and therefore Machiavelli wrote that it would now be better to prepare for war.* What terms can you hope to make with enemies, who, while still on the further side of the mountains, and with our own troops still under arms, demand 100,000 ducats of you within three days, and 50,000 more within ten? When once within reach of you they will exact all that you possess. There is no resource but resistance, and therefore it is better to resist them among the mountains than close beneath these walls.†

Although snow storms and rocks still barred the progress of the army, and there was still some talk of coming to terms, and of the ever increasing sums necessary to obtain them, yet, having no further business in Bologna, Machiavelli set out on his return to Florence, and on the 16th April wrote to Vettori from Forlì: "Should Bourbon pursue his march, we must decide upon war and discard all thoughts of peace. Should he remain stationary we must absolutely make peace, without thinking of war. But if we are driven to war, we must no longer drag our steps, but press forward with

* *Opere*, vol. vii. p. 496, letter from Bologna, 30th March, 1527.

† *Ibidem*, vol. vii. p. 498, letter from Bologna, 2nd April, 1527.

desperate haste, since frequently despair can find remedies such as were never to be found by deliberation. I bear love to Messer Francesco Guicciardini, love to my country, and I tell you on the strength of the experience earned by fifty-five years of life, that I do not think that there has ever been a harder travail than this, when peace is a necessity, and war cannot be avoided ; and when we are burdened by a prince who can neither decide wholly for peace nor wholly for war."

On the 18th, from Brisighella, he addressed another letter to the same correspondent, in a tone of still greater uncertainty, and then proceeded to Florence, where he might still be of service, and where he was awaited by his family with the utmost anxiety. His wife and children were in great dread of the landsknechts and Spaniards, and had already moved nearly everything from the villa. Machiavelli had promised to join them in time, in case of pressing danger. On the 2nd April, he concluded an affectionate letter from Forlì, to his son Guido, with these words : "Salute Monna Marietta, and "tell her that I have been almost daily on the point of "setting out, and am thinking of it now, and that I have "never had so great a desire to be in Florence ; and that "it is no fault of mine if I have not come. Only tell her "(your mother) that no matter what news she may hear, "she is to be of good cheer, for that I shall arrive before "any trouble occurs." *

His son, who was still in his boyhood, sent an answer on the 17th, saying that they were all much rejoiced by

* *Opere*, vol. viii. p. 226, letter lxxx.

his promise. But he must be sure to warn them at once if the landsknechts were coming, so as to have time to carry everything out of the house.* This letter, traced in big and almost infantile characters, was preserved by Machiavelli, who returned to his family according to his promise.

The citizens of Florence had been prepared for every sacrifice in order to avert the danger by which they were threatened. They had quickly collected and despatched the first 80,000 ducats promised to Bourbon by the Pope ; they were melting the gold and silver plate of their churches in order to get together the remainder. But their messengers received news by the road that the terms had not even been accepted, and had barely time to rescue their precious burden and bring it back with them to Florence. Accordingly, nothing could now be thought of save means of defence. But there were very few soldiers in the city, and the fortification works, although frequently urged on by Machiavelli, could hardly be said to be really begun. The inhabitants were heartily discontented with Cardinal Passerini, who listened to no advice and did nothing. "The whole evil," wrote Guicciardini, who was also in Florence at this moment, "is caused by the ignorance of that great oaf, who concerns himself about trifles and neglects matters of importance. He will not permit others to attend to them, and he can do nothing himself. He only thinks of protecting the abode of the Medici and

* *Carte del Machiavelli*, case v. No. 21. Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xix.

the palace ; he neglects the government, and does not perceive what ruin he is causing. Oh God ! What pain to behold so much confusion !” *

Guicciardini had succeeded in bringing the army of the League into the vicinity of Florence, and this had had the effect of deciding the Imperial forces to continue their march towards Rome. But the former army, although friendly, did not refrain from pillaging the territory, and accordingly the discontent of the Florentines was always on the increase. In fact, a quarrel that occurred on the 26th April, between a citizen and a soldier, sufficed to bring about a general disturbance, in which the people riotously clamoured for arms. It chanced that at that moment Passerini had mounted his horse in the company of the Cardinals Ridolfi, Cibo and Ippolito de' Medici, in order to ride forth to meet the Duke of Urbino, who, together with the Venetian *provveditori* and the Lieutenant, had fixed his quarters at a villa a few miles from the city. Passerini determined to show his contempt for the riot, and rode on without even making inquiries as to its object or gravity. This caused a rumour that the Medici and their representatives had fled from the city ; accordingly the palace was invaded by a crowd shouting : “ Popolo e libertà.” Many influential citizens hastened to the spot ; the disturbance assumed serious proportions ; insulting cries were heard, and more than one dagger-blow was struck. The rioters finally proclaimed the deposition of the Medicean government and the re-establishment of the Republic. But the

* *Opere inedite*, vol. v., letter of the 26th and 29th April, from Florence.

Cardinal, receiving timely warning of what was going on, hastened back with some of the Duke's harquebusiers; the Piazza was occupied by the soldiery; the doors of the palace were closed, and the Medicean guards, who had concealed themselves, left their hiding-places and tried to force the bolts with their pikes. Revolution and bloodshed appeared to be imminent; but the citizens shut up in the palace contented themselves with hurling a few tiles from the windows, and these fell at a distance without injuring any one. Jacopo Nardi then showed how the coping of the balustrade could be dislodged, and let some of the stones fall on the soldiers, whereupon the latter drew off.* Neither party much desired to fight in earnest, and rather sought to bring the affair to a speedy end. It was impossible to defend the palace without weapons, and neither was it easy to force its doors without delay. Besides, were it taken by storm, the citizens inside would certainly be killed, and this would increase the disturbance in the city. Accordingly, Francesco Guicciardini, whose brother the Gonfalonier was shut in with the others, and Federigo da Bozzolo at last appeared with a written promise of a general amnesty, and all ended with the election of a new Signory. Undoubtedly, had the Pope's affairs been going less badly, he would soon have wreaked a cruel revenge, but for the moment there was nothing to fear, as he was absorbed by affairs of a graver sort.†

* One of these stones fell upon Michel Angelo's David, and broke the left arm into three pieces, that were afterwards put together again.

† Nardi, *Storia*, vol. ii. p. 133 and fol.; Nerli, *Commentarii*, p. 148;

The imperial army had continued its march towards Rome, and as usual was followed at a respectful distance by that of the League. The Duke of Urbino gave the signal for departure, and marched his men through the city, and all Florence felt amazed that troops so well drilled and well armed should be incapable of facing the enemy, and only equal to laying waste the lands and pillaging the dwellings of their allies. With infinite reluctance Guicciardini, too, was compelled to accompany the grievous and shameful march. On the 8th May, when at Castello della Pieve, he received the fatal news that the enemy, after a few hours' fight, had stormed the gates of the Eternal City, were engaged in sacking it, and that the Pope was shut up in the Castle of St. Angelo. Meanwhile the Duke of Urbino had marched against Perugia to overthrow its government, instead of pursuing the enemy. In vain the Lieutenant did all in his power to now induce him to make at least one final effort. In vain he sent despatches to Passerini urging him to send troops from Florence to attempt the Pope's liberation by means of some daring stroke. "The unhappy man is confined in the castle with no hope but in your assistance, and he solicits it in terms that might move stones to tears. But you do not even send him a word of reply. As I hope for God's mercy, I would rather perish than witness this great cruelty. You are so engrossed in anxiety for the palace and people of Florence, that you are oblivious of all else.

Nevertheless, if the Pope be lost, your cares will go for nothing, since in losing him we lose the soul of our body." *

And soon after he wrote to say that there was nothing more to hope for any one; the Pope would come to terms of some sort with his adversaries, and they would inevitably turn their arms against Florence.†

The news of the taking and sack of Rome and the consequent danger of the war being carried into Tuscany, reached Florence on the 11th May. The first thought of every one was to get rid of Cardinal Passerini, from whose rule no good was to be expected. This time there was a general disturbance, in which all the most noted citizens, including Filippo Strozzi, the kinsman of the Medici, took part. Passerini was soon convinced that there was nothing to be done, and went away with Ippolito and Alessandro de' Medici. The Republic was proclaimed on the 16th May, and it was then hastily decided to convoke for the 20th of the same month both the Council of Eighty and the Great Council, in order to nominate, for one year only, a Gonfalonier, whose term of office might, however, be renewed. The partition walls that had been run up in the Hall of the Great Council to form chambers for the accommodation of the Medici's guards, were demolished by the scions of the noblest families of Florence, who enthusiastically set to work to trundle barrows of stones and mortar.

* *Opere inedite*, vol. ix. ; *La prigionia di Clemente VII. e la caduta della Repubblica fiorentina*, p. 10, letter of the 18th May, 1527.

† *Opere inedite*, vol. ix. ; letters of the 21st and 26th May, 1527.

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On the 1st June the Gonfalonier Niccolò Capponi entered office with the new Signory. The new Eight of Balla were elected, and the Eight of *Pratica* were suppressed and replaced, as in Soderini's day, by the Ten of War. Every one appeared satisfied with the restoration of liberty ; but there was not a moment to lose. Instant preparations must be made for defence, inasmuch as the imperial forces, after devastating Rome, would certainly attack Florence on their way to the north. In one way or another the Pope would come to some agreement with the Emperor, and both would desire to wreak their revenge upon the resuscitated Republic. De Leyva had long promised his soldiery to let them measure the brocades of Florence with their pikes, and the whole army was voracious for spoil.

Accordingly the Florentines began to discuss the means of arming all able-bodied citizens in their country's defence ; of procuring worthy captains ; of fortifying the city walls, not in accordance with the fantastic projects of the Pope, but after the plans of competent persons. And before long the design sent by Michel Angelo Buonarotti arrived, "and even won the "praise and approval of military men." * The ardour of the citizens grew hotter from day to day, and it was plain that at last they were really nerved to desperate efforts. All this, however, was the prologue of a fresh drama, which must not occupy our attention ; the siege and heroic defence of Florence being beyond the limits of the present history.

* Nardi, *Storia di Firenze*, vol. ii. p. 161.

CHAPTER XVII.

Machiavelli is sent to the camp near Rome—His return to Florence—Fresh calamities and new sorrows—His illness and death—His will—A dream attributed to Machiavelli.

WHERE now was Machiavelli, the *provisor murorum*, he who, although with scanty success, had so strenuously laboured to fortify the walls of his native city, and who, in the endeavour to save it from attack and pillage by the imperial forces, had made so many journeys about Italy? During the first week in May, he had been sent with Francesco Bandini on a mission to Guicciardini, who was now within the Papal territories, and continually drawing nearer to Rome, in the vain hope of being able to effect something towards the personal safety of the Pope. The Florentine envoys were commissioned to investigate the state of affairs, and inquire, in the name of Passerini and of the government, if anything could be done to assist his Holiness. But, in truth, Florence had neither the wish nor the power to do anything. Guicciardini at once sent the envoys on to Civita Vecchia, where Andrea Doria, the admiral of the Papal fleet, was then to be found, to inquire concerning his plans for the deliverance of the Pope. And they

were also to ask him if he would succour the army by at least sending the promised stores, since the soldiers were starving and threatening to disband from one moment to another. On the 22nd May, Machiavelli and Bandini wrote that Doria could not employ his vessels in the transport of provisions or for any other use, being obliged to keep them in readiness for the Pope, who might need them at any moment, should he succeed in making his escape from the castle. Therefore the admiral only placed a brigantine and a galley at their disposition ; but these they might use for any purpose, and even to convey them back to Leghorn. He approved the idea of the sudden attack planned by Guicciardini for the release of the Pope, but seemed to have but little hope of its success.* And this is the last of Machiavelli's letters that remains in existence. In consequence of the revolution and change of government in Florence, he could no longer act in an official capacity. He hastened, therefore, to return to his native city, whither he was soon to be followed by Guicciardini.

These two great Italians now found themselves in a most difficult position. Guicciardini, the adversary of popular government, and connected by indissoluble ties with the destinies of the Pope and the Medici, whom he had served with fidelity and intelligence, found Florence in the power of his enemies, was speedily obliged to withdraw into voluntary exile, and deemed himself fortunate to escape the confiscation of his property. But unhappy as was his situation it had at least the advantage of

* *Opere*, vol. vii. p. 509.

being well-defined and decisive. He could do nothing but hope and await the return of the Medici, through whom alone could his fortunes be re-established. Machiavelli, on the contrary, found himself in a very different and far worse position. Although a sincere republican, he had first fallen into disgrace upon the overthrow of liberty. After many misfortunes and severe embarrassments, he had at last obtained some insignificant employment from the Medici at the moment when their own fate was identified with the general desire to save the country from foreign devastation. To this end he had laboured with almost youthful vigour, had expended all the activity and energy of his last years, although now nearly sixty years of age and in a very broken state of health. By day and by night, in winter frosts and summer heats, in danger from hostile troops and exposed to numerous other risks, he had never granted himself any rest. Now, all at once, on his return to Florence, he involuntarily but inevitably appeared in the light of a foe to the freedom that he had so passionately worshipped, and of the independence of the city to which he had devoted his best strength. For he returned there as the servant of the tyrants that were now expelled. What, then, had he to hope?

Accordingly it cannot astonish us to learn from the accounts given in the letters of Busini, that Machiavelli was often heard to sigh very bitterly when returning to Florence with Pietro Carnesecchi and the latter's sister.* Certainly, however, his sighs were not caused, as Busini

* Busini, *Lettere*, pp. 84, 85, letter ix.

ill-naturedly supposes, by regret for the revival of freedom, but, on the contrary, by grief that he should be naturally regarded as its opponent. Now was the moment to strengthen the fortifications, arm the inhabitants, and encourage them by means of free institutions to heroic self-sacrifice in the defence of their country. These were the things that Machiavelli had always preached, always desired, always hoped to accomplish; yet it was from these things that he was now held excluded, of these the supposed enemy.

In fact, directly he arrived, he found that while all were engaged in reconstituting the Republic and preparing for its defence, no one referred to him; but that, on the contrary, he was an object of distrust and almost avoidance. The friends of the Medici went either into exile or hiding; and those who had managed to desert their party in time and were thought to be ardent supporters of the new government, could not be expected to remember Machiavelli, who had no aptitude for playing the tribune nor ostentatiously changing his livery and course of action. He was already deeply afflicted by this; but an acuter pang was added on receiving a positive proof of that which he had foreseen. On the 10th June, the Eight of *Pratica* being abolished and the Ten of War reconstituted, Michelozzi was dismissed from the secretaryship and another was to be named in his place. Machiavelli had filled that post most honourably in Soderini's time; he had recently superintended the fortifications of the walls while holding a similar office, it was therefore natural to hope that

he would have been applied to on this occasion. But by a decree of the 10th June, a certain Francesco Tarugi was nominated to the vacant Secretaryship of the Ten, without any one appearing to retain any remembrance of the former colleague of Marcello and Soderini.* This finally convinced him that his career was at an end. To be prohibited from serving his country, from serving the cause of liberty that he had so ardently loved and for which he had suffered so much, was a blow that Niccolò Machiavelli could not survive.

Whether this disappointment was the only immediate cause of his death, cannot be ascertained. He had a long-standing disorder of the digestive organs, but it is certain that on the 20th June, a few days after the nomination of Tarugi, he fell seriously ill. He took his accustomed remedy, but this time it failed to give relief; he was seized with violent spasms of the stomach, and his last hour rapidly approached. Wife, children and friends were gathered round his bed. On the 22nd of June he expired. "He consented to confess his sins to Frà "Matteo, who stayed with him to the last." So wrote his son Piero in a letter to a friend, concluding the brief account with the words: "as you know, he has left us in the utmost poverty."† It is not surprising to us, that

* *Vide* appendix to the Italian edition, document xx. This proves that Donato Giannotti was only named secretary in October, 1527, that is after Tarugi and Machiavelli were both deceased, and shows, therefore, that there was no truth in the rumour of Machiavelli having died of grief on finding Giannotti elected in his stead.

† The letter is not dated and is addressed to Francesco Nelli, Professor at Pisa, and a kinsman of Machiavelli. It is in the *Opere*, vol. i. p. cxxix.

Machiavelli should have consented to see a confessor, notwithstanding his many diatribes against popes, priests and friars. It was a common practice of the time. Besides, although he had frequently inveighed against the corruption of the clergy, and the evils wrought upon Italy by the Church, he had never attacked the dogmas of the faith, and had never indeed discussed them.

In 1522, Machiavelli had made a second will,* constituting his four sons Bernardo, Lodovico, Guido and Piero his heirs; to his daughter Bartolommea, or Baccia, afterwards married to Giovanni, father of Giuliano de' Ricci, he, according to custom, left nothing but her maintenance, to which indeed she was legally entitled. We are ignorant whether he had succeeded in securing her a small dowry in the *Monte delle Fanciulle*, although in the will itself he had declared his intention of so doing. His wife, Marietta, was mentioned in terms of sincere and unaltered affection, and named executrix and guardian to his younger children.

But notwithstanding his Christian death and the love manifested by him to the last towards his wife and family, all sorts of stories of various degrees of malignity were of course circulated by the detractors of Machiavelli, who did not even respect his dying moments. Giovio stated in his *Elogia* that Machiavelli had died with a jest on his lips, and from an overdose of the medicine that he thought a specific for all complaints. Busini, too, who had always been hostile to him, said

* Both wills are included in the *Opere*, vol. i. pp. 133-138 and 139-144.

in writing to Varchi in 1549, that Machiavelli had died partly from natural causes, and partly from grief at the election of Donato Giannotti to the office he coveted for himself. This, as we have already seen, was totally untrue. He also added that, on falling ill, Machiavelli instantly took his usual pills and finding himself grow rapidly worse, "told his famous dream to Filippo" (Strozzi), Francesco del Nero, Jacopo Nardi and others, "and then reluctantly died, cutting jests to the last." * Busini, however, does not say in what this celebrated dream consisted, nor do we find any mention of it in contemporary writers. Ricci, after severe censure of the terms in which Giovio seemed to allude to profane jests upon religious subjects uttered by Machiavelli in his last moments, declared them to be mere baseless calumnies. He also added that the medicine used by his grandfather was very mild, and that Machiavelli had died the death of a Christian, surrounded by his family and friends. Neither Marietta nor any of the children, including Baccia, the mother of Ricci, had ever made the least allusion to these false reports.†

After all, there was nothing extraordinary in the circumstance of his death. He was advanced in years ; had been recently exposed to many hardships, travelling by night and day in all weathers. He had returned to Florence, after crossing the Roman Campagna on the way, at a season when the climate begins to be very dangerous ; he had long been agitated by continual

* Busini, *Lettere*, letter ix. pp. 84, 85.

† *Vide* the Ricci Codex, p. 193.

mental suffering, that of late had been greatly aggravated. All this was more than sufficient to account for his death, without requiring any special explanation, and it is impossible to suppose that he could have had any disposition to joke in the presence of his confessor and of the wife and children that he was leaving for ever.

Nevertheless, the dream that was unknown to those who attended his deathbed, was actually related by an after generation. According to their account, Machiavelli beheld in his sleep a crowd of famished and miserable people. On asking who they were he was told: the blessed of Paradise. Hardly had they vanished from his view than he saw instead a throng of grave-visaged men who were conversing on political matters, and among them he could distinguish many illustrious philosophers of Greece and Rome. These were the souls condemned to eternal suffering. Being asked in which company he preferred to remain, he instantly replied: I would rather be in Hell and converse with great minds upon State questions, than live in Paradise with the rabble I saw just now. It is hard to decide who could have been the first to relate this dream. Bayle gives a long account of it in his Dictionary, but only quotes authors of a date long posterior to Machiavelli's time, and among them Binet the Jesuit.* Never-

* Stephen Binet, of Dijon (1569-1639). At p. 359 of his work, *Du Salut d'Origène*, he relates the dream, without giving any authority for it. These are his words: "On arrive a ce détestable poinet d'honneur, où arriva "Machiavel sur la fin de sa vie: car il eut cetté illusion peu devant que "rendre son esprit. Il vit un tas de pauvres gens, comme coquins, des- "chirez, affamez, contrefaits, fort mal en ordre et en très petit nombre; on

theless, Busini's words show us that there had been already much talk of the pretended dream, although as yet of only a vague and indefinite kind. Rather than a dream, it seems to us to be a sufficiently exact parody of Machiavelli's pagan spirit. As an instance, we may quote a speech from the beginning of the fourth act of *La Mandragola*, where Callimaco, despairing of the success of his illicit love, says to himself : " On the other hand the worst that can befall thee, is to die and go to "hell. Many others have died before thee, and many "worthy men are in hell. Why, then, shouldst thou be "ashamed to go there in thy turn ? " These expressions, and many others of the same kind in the *Storie* and the *Discorsi*, especially wherever comparisons are drawn between Pagan creeds and Christianity, might have given origin to this fictitious dream. Nor is it impossible that in happier times Machiavelli himself may have related it as a joke, but we cannot suppose that he would have done so in the hour of his death. It is certain that Francesco Ottomano, the most ancient authority cited by

"luy dit que c'estoit ceux de Paradis, desquels il estoit écrit : *Beati pauperes, quoniam ipsorum est regnum coelorum*. Ceux-ci estans retirez, on fit paroistre un nombre innombrable de personnages pleins de gravité et de majesté : on les voyoit comme un Sénat, où on traitoit d'affaires d'Estat, et fort serieuses : il entrevit Platon, Seneque, Plutarque, Tacite, et d'autres de cetté qualité. Il demanda qui estoient ces Messieurs là si venerables ; on lui dit que c'estoient les damnés, et que c'estoient des ames reprouvées du Ciel. *Sapientia hujus sæculi inimica est Dei*. Celà estant passé, on luy demanda desquels il vouloit estre. Il respondit qu'il aimait beaucoup mieux estre en Enfer avec ces grands esprits, pour déviser avec eux des affaires d'Estat, que d'estre avec cette vermine de ces belistres qu'on luy avoit fait voir. Et à tant il mourut, et alla voir comme vout les affaires d'Estat de l'autre monde."

Bayle, wrote concerning this dream in 1580, and merely said that he had read in another author how Machiavelli had declared in a certain part of his works that, when he died, he would rather go to Hell than to Paradise. For in the latter he would meet no one but wretched monks and apostles, whereas in Hell he would be in the company of cardinals, popes, princes and kings.* And this would tend to prove that the dream was invented by Machiavelli's adversaries, in censure of certain opinions of his that were held to be unchristian.

Machiavelli's remains were laid in Santa Croce, in the private family chapel.† In course of time this chapel was given up to a religious confraternity, that erected an altar in it and buried their brethren there all together, without any one raising objections to this proceeding.‡

* "Wolphius, nuper Augustæ mortuus, in suis *Commentariis in Tusculanas*, quos anno superiore mihi donavit, Machiavellum scelerum, impietatum et flagitiorum omnium magistrum appellat, ac testatur illum, quodam loco scripsisse: sibi multo optabilius esse post mortem ad inferos et diabolos detrudi quam in coelum ascendere. Nam hic nullos reperitur nisi mendiculos et misellos quosdam monachos, heremitas, apostolos; illic victurum se cum cardinalibus, cum papis, regibus, et principibus." Epistola Francisci Hotomani, 28 dec. 1580, No. 99. Francisci et Joannis Hotomanorum, *Epistolæ*, Amstelodami, 1700.

See likewise Baldelli in his *Elogio* of Machiavelli, note 16. We have failed to discover the work of Wolphius, quoted by Ottomano, and do not know whether it has been printed or not.

† In the *Libro dei Morti*, from 1457 to 1501, No. 6, a. c. 288t. In the register of the year 1500 we find this entry: "Messer Bernardo Machiavelli buried in Santa Croce on the said day (10th May, 1500)." And in the *Libro dei Becchini*, No. 10, a. c. 128, under the date of the 22nd June, 1527. "Niccolò di . . . Machiavelli, buried in Santa Croce on the 22nd." Both these books are in the Florence Archives. The same entry is given in the *Libro dei Morti*, No. 9.

‡ Ricci mentions this in his *Priorista* (Quartiere S. Spirito, 160). He says that the chapel was in the side of the "wall turned to the north, near

The family soon became extinct, for of all Machiavelli's sons Bernardo was the only one to leave male issue, one of whom, Niccolò, became a canon, and the other, Alessandro, died in 1597,* leaving a female child aged nine, of the name of Ippolita, who married one of the Ricci family. The Machiavelli chapel then fell into still greater decay, so that its precise situation was no longer remembered. For the reasons elsewhere explained by us in detail the name of Machiavelli was at last held in abhorrence by his own fellow-citizens. His fame, however, began to extend in the eighteenth century, as is evidenced by the numerous editions of his works, that were almost simultaneously given to the world.† In 1760, several of his unpublished compositions were printed at Lucca, and in 1767 the Preposto Ferdinando Fossi published a volume of his *Legazioni* that were

"the so-called door of the Guardi;" and tells how a monk of the Santa Croce church went to the Canon Niccolò, son of Bernardo di Niccolò Machiavelli, and informed him that many persons not connected with the family were now buried all together in the Machiavelli chapel, and that this seemed to him to be an unlawful abuse; and that it would be right to put a stop to it, and to restore the chapel. But the canon replied: "Oh, let them continue to do so, for my father was fond of society, and the more dead he has in his company, the better he will be pleased."

* In the *Priorista*, Ricci, Quartiere S. Spirito, at c. 273⁴, it is noted that in 1581, Bernardo, son of Niccolò, son of Bernardo Machiavelli, "was more than seventy years of age, and indeed close upon eighty." The Canon Niccolò, son of this Bernardo, died of erysipelas on the 10th June, 1597, and his brother Alessandro died in 1597, leaving a daughter of nine years named Ippolita. And thus the family became extinct. In the same year died Lorenzino, son of Lorenzo di Ristoro Machiavelli. With him another branch of the family came to an end. The third and last became extinct at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

† The Hague, 1726; London (Paris), 1768; Venice, 1769; London, 1772.

likewise inedited. At last, in 1782, the large edition of his complete works in six quarto volumes was issued,* and, considering its date, was a worthy monument to the great Italian. It was dedicated to Lord Cowper,† who in conjunction with the Grand Duke, Pietro Leopoldo, had given material assistance towards its completion. This English nobleman was almost a citizen of Florence, where he proved himself to be a zealous patron of scholarship, and an ardent admirer of Machiavelli. In 1787 he, again in co-operation with the Grand Duke, became an active and generous promoter of the plan started by Alberto Rimbotti for a public subscription towards the erection of a monument to Machiavelli in

* This edition is preceded by a learned preface from the pen of Reginaldo Tanzini. The editors had not been allowed to avail themselves of the Strozzi library, which contained many other of Machiavelli's autographs. Soon after, however, that branch of the Strozzi became extinct, and the Grand Duke purchased the most precious manuscripts of the family library. Then in the Barberini library in Rome a Codex was discovered, containing more of Machiavelli's inedited writings. Accordingly, in 1796 a second edition of the *Opere* was begun in eight volumes, which was to comprise many *Legasioni* and letters never before published. It was, however, incomplete, for it neither included the diplomatic nor private correspondence, and was compiled with so much haste that in the second book of the *Discorsi* there is a gap in the text from the middle of chap. xxx. to the end of chap. xxxiii. See the preface by Francesco Tassi to the edition of the *Opere*, Italy, 1813 (Florence, 1826).

† George Nassau Clavering, third Earl Cowper, born in 1738, established himself in Florence in his youth, and in 1775 married Miss Anna Gore, daughter of a Lincolnshire gentleman, and a great favourite of the Grand Duke. With the exception of Sir Horace Mann, Lord Cowper was the most popular Englishman in Florence. In 1768 he was elected member of the Della Cruscan Academy. He returned the affection shown to him by the Florentines, and was a generous promoter of every design for the embellishment of the city. *Vide* Reumont, *Geschichte Toscana's* Gotha, *Perthes*, 1876-7, vol. ii. pp. 360, 361.

His Monument in Santa Croce. 429

Santa Croce. Innocenzo Spinazzi, a sculptor of some merit for that period of artistic decadence, was charged with the work, and Doctor Ferroni added to it the simple but eloquent inscription :

TANTO NOMINI NULLUM PAR ELOGIUM

NICOLAUS MACHIARELLI,

Obit Anno A P. V.* MDXXVII.

* *A partu Virginis*, although, according to the Florentine style, the year began *ab incarnatione*.



CONCLUSION.

MACHIAVELLI, as we have seen, was very closely connected with his times. Therefore our estimate of him must greatly depend upon our estimate of the age in which he lived. He came into the world at a moment when political corruption was general throughout Europe, but more predominant in Italy than elsewhere on account of the greater number of persons taking part in public life. Hence, the evil effects of this corruption infected every section of society in our country. Our culture enhanced the criminality of the vices and misdeeds of a statecraft which was no longer ruled by the blind and ungoverned passions of the Middle Ages, but was the product of refined calculation and cunning, full of cruelty and devoid of scruples. With us mediæval institutions rapidly fell into decay, leaving individual members of the community deprived of all guidance save that of their own instincts. In France, England and Spain, feudalism still served as a basis for the sovereign power of those three great monarchies. And being possessed of more stable traditions, these were compelled to pursue a policy that, while no less corrupt

as regarded its means, was necessarily more national in its aims.

Nevertheless Italian corruption has assumed exaggerated proportions in the eyes of posterity. It has been forgotten that this corruption mainly prevailed among the upper classes of society, the statesmen and *litterati* upon whom the attention of historians is almost exclusively fixed. Among the lower classes virtue and morality still remained more firmly rooted. This we find to be conclusively proved by the evidence of popular literature, familiar correspondence, and the lives of a vast number of obscure individuals. In many parts of Italy the population was far more cultured and gentle than beyond the Alps, and committed fewer crimes. Besides, although other nations had the greatest mistrust for Italian politicians and carefully stood on their guard against them, they showed no want of confidence in our merchants or bankers ; and many foreigners admitted Italian physicians, secretaries and preceptors into their households.

To this moral divergence between two sections of our society was added—at least among the upper classes—a contradictory conception of life itself. All private relations were ruled by Christian morality, or at all events professed unquestioning adherence to its precepts ; but it was forsaken in public life, where it was supposed to have no practical value. Good faith, loyalty and Christian goodness would have subjected to certain destruction any prince or government that should have actually obeyed their dictates in political

matters. The state would have certainly fallen a prey to the enemy ; would perhaps have dissolved into anarchy. This contradiction was patent to all ; but no one dared to investigate its causes, or thought of overcoming it. The human conscience was, as it were, at war with itself, through being dragged in two opposite directions. And the one road led to Heaven, the other to Hell. So the human conscience was sometimes driven to decide "that it was better to love your country than your soul."

A similar state of things had serious consequences with regard to life and to literature. Scepticism invaded men's souls ; the religious sentiment was weakened ; it was attempted to study the world and realities as they actually were, without any concern for other matters. A disproportionate admiration for the ancients arose, precisely because the ancients led men back to reality, to nature, and not only recognized the exigencies of statecraft, but exalted to heaven all who submitted to them for the safety and prosperity of their country. Literature, too, devoted itself to the study of nature, form and material beauty, and sought to become pagan in the midst of a Christian society. The ancient forms, however, were slowly inspired with a new spirit, and gave birth to the art of the Renaissance which is an entirely Italian creation, and almost a first preliminary of peace between Paganism and Christianity, mind and nature, heaven and earth. But in practical life it was less easy to establish a similar reconciliation. No inconsiderable portion of literature itself, romance and comedy above all, reflects the internal chaos that was bewildering the

Italian intellect. The national mind was going through a hard struggle in the midst of a political, social and intellectual transformation. It was seeking the basis of a natural and rational scheme of morals, which, while respecting the historic necessities of life, should be in no contradiction with revealed morality ; it craved independence of reason and conscience, without the destroyal of the sanctity of faith. And while Italy was writhing in this struggle, when already, through her own intrinsic strength, a new light was dawning in the horizon, all Europe fell upon her, stifled and then reviled her for leaving to others the completion of her own special work.

Without having extensive culture, Machiavelli early learnt to prize Pagan antiquity more highly than all else, and had a particular admiration for the Romans. His mind was formed by their history and their literature. Nature had gifted him with an extraordinarily limpid and acute intelligence ; with an exquisite taste for elegance of form ; with a most lively fancy, which although insufficient to make him a poet, influenced him continually ; with a mordant and satiric spirit that discerned the comic side of human events, and gave added force to the pungent wit of the sarcastic sallies that gained him so many enemies and detractors. For he had a kindly nature, and cannot be charged with a single bad action. His manners certainly were loose, but less so than might be imagined from the very licentious language which, according to the custom of the day, he adopted in his letters and his plays. Towards his wife and children he showed invariable affection to the last hour of his

existence. But Machiavelli's real life was all in his intellect ; there lay the true source of his greatness. His predominating mental gift, and that in which he outstripped all his contemporaries, was a singular power of piercing to the innermost kernel of historic and social facts. He was no patient investigator of minute historical details, nor had he the speculative genius required to dwell upon metaphysical and abstract considerations touching the nature of man. But he was unequalled in exploring and bringing to light the first origin and special character of any political revolution or social transformation. He was unequalled in discerning the qualities determining the nature of a people or a state. No one could rival him in the power of indicating what, in any given society, was the character, not so much of this or that sovereign in particular, as of the sovereign, captain, aristocracy or people in general. It was in these things that all the mighty originality of his intelligence was shown.

And it was this predominant faculty that gave him so irresistible a vocation for a life devoted to public affairs. Not that it was a career leading him to wealth, since, notwithstanding his aptitude for business, he was not possessed in any exceptional degree of that practical intuition of individual character which confers the instinctive power of guiding and mastering men. In this quality he was surpassed by many of his contemporaries, and notably by Guicciardini. Nevertheless, Machiavelli found in public affairs a wide field for the exercise of his observant faculty, and for his feverish activity of mind,

and was accordingly passionately devoted to them. On first assuming the Secretaryship of the Republic he was merely an excellent official servant. But his assiduity in his duties, his aptitude for planning and originating new designs, gained him the confidence of Soderini, who speedily began to employ him in matters of greater moment.

The circumstance that decided once for all the direction of his future studies, set him on the road for which he was naturally predestined, and formed the commencement of his true political training, was his mission to the court of the Duke of Valentinois. He then perceived how an adventurer of the worst type, and capable of the most iniquitous actions, might have great qualities as a statesman and general. By a course of bloodshed and treason the duke actually succeeded in extirpating the most abominable tyrants of Romagna. He founded a government that re-established order, tranquillity, and prompt administration of justice among the hardy inhabitants of that province, who on being delivered from oppression, began to prosper, and conceived a lively affection for their new ruler. Had he been a kinder, or less corrupt man, had he shown any hesitation, his mercy, so Machiavelli thought, would have been cruel. The figure of Cæsar Borgia rose before his eyes as the living personification of the moral contrast afflicting the age, and helped him to explain the enigma. He clearly saw that statecraft has ways and means of its own, which are not the ways and means of private morality ; that, on the contrary, the morality of private life may some-

times check a statesman in mid-career and render him vacillating, without his being either a good or a bad man ; and that it is mainly vacillation of this kind that leads to the downfall of States. There must be no vacillation, he said, but a daring adoption of the measures demanded by the nature of events. Such measures will always be justified, when the end is obtained. And the end in view must be the welfare of the State. He who obtains this, if even he be a wicked man, may be condemned for his wickedness, but, as a prince, will deserve everlasting glory. If, on the contrary, he should cause the ruin of the State, whether through private ambition, or from hesitation born of a good motive, he will be consigned to infamy as a wicked or incapable prince, even when regarded as a private individual he may be deserving of the highest praise. Such is the true meaning of Machiavelli's maxim : that the end justifies the means.

He adhered to these ideas during the whole of his life, and they formed the basis upon which his political doctrines were built up. But the pressure of affairs left him no time to excogitate or transcribe them after his return to Florence. His missions to the French king and to the emperor gave him opportunities for investigating the general organization of France and Germany, and for writing admirable descriptions of all that he had noted. It was then, too, that he learned to recognize the immense advantages accruing to the national strength and general well-being from the formation of a great State. Besides this, the examination he was enabled to

make of the military institutions of various countries, particularly of Switzerland and Germany ; his experience of the siege of Pisa, and the historic examples of Greece and Rome, taught him distrust of mercenary troops and armies of adventure, and awoke in his mind the ideal conception of an armed and free people. This was the origin of his scheme of a Militia Ordinance, for which he made so many studies, and vainly expended so huge an amount of labour. But all these ideas that were gradually forming in his mind were still in a fragmentary state. It was impossible for him to give them any systematic arrangement, while obliged to travel continually, both within and without the territories of the Republic, and to write quantities of official letters which were often of very trifling importance. He occasionally composed a few verses, sketched a few comedies ; but these pleasant labours were always interrupted, and only served him for passing amusements. But he still pursued his observations, and continually added to them, especially when the Republic was passing through the difficult crises and dangers that occasionally threatened its existence. He served the government to the last with great fidelity and disinterestedness, and did all in his power to prevent its fall, which could not, however, be averted. After fourteen years of unremitting labour, after undertaking many diplomatic missions, after handling large sums of money for the organization of the militia and the expenses of the war, he was still as poor as at the outset of his career.

The fall of the Republic was a personal misfortune to

him, because it deprived him of office, drove him from public affairs, and plunged him in the greatest financial difficulties ; nevertheless, it proved a blessing in disguise, since it forced him to think and to write, and won him immortality. Had he always preserved his secretaryship, we should have had nothing from him excepting his *Legazioni*. But on being condemned to private life, his ideas began to assume shape and order ; his mental horizon became enlarged. The Medici, being all-powerful in Rome and Florence, it was impossible at that time to hope for the revival of popular government, and he therefore began to meditate on the constitution of a strong Italian State. He thus invented his political system, which has a double character. On the one hand he gives us a new science of Statesmanship, on the other he continually applies this science to the Italy of his own day, and seeks practical methods of erecting her into a nation, and putting her on the road to real greatness. This duplex conception was expounded by him in the *Prince*, the *Discourses*, and the *Art of War*, and is more or less evident throughout all Machiavelli's works. Equally duplex, too, is the basis of his system, for it is founded upon experience and the lessons of history, the latter being nearly always brought in to support the conclusions of the former.

In the *Histories* we find Machiavelli inspired by the same Republican spirit by which we have beheld him dominated amid the whirl of affairs, and to which he was unceasingly faithful. In penning his *Histories* he thought that he had discovered that all great political

events were the invariable product of the will and intelligent daring of some great man. He became convinced that the ruin of Italy was the direct result of her divisions and of the foreign invasions principally brought about by Papal greed.

Our Italian motherland, he said in conclusion, can never be prosperous nor great until it is united, and its unity can only be the work of a Prince-reformer. This prince always appeared to him in the likeness of Cæsar Borgia, as a strong and intelligent will, capable of organizing and disorganizing, making and unmaking nations at his own pleasure. This incarnated will-power is almost a natural force, foregoing all personal characteristics, all individual and moral value ; it becomes one with its deeds, by which, and by the end accomplished is it only to be judged. And only to a solitary directing will is it given to establish and organize the State. The people may be able to preserve and develop it, to ensure its prosperity, but can never be its creator.

In this strain the *Prince* was conceived and written. It lays before us the constitution and organization of a State by the work of the man who is its living personification, but in whom the individual and private conscience is, as it were, eradicated. The prince must trample on every obstacle to the accomplishment of his great purpose ; must be checked by no scruples. It was in this way that the mind of Machiavelli gradually wrought out his conception of the organic unity of the State, and it was in the same way that the modern State afterwards took shape in real history. This demonstrates the great

value of his conception, and explains the singular fascination that, all calumnies notwithstanding, it has exercised upon the minds of thinkers and politicians. [It was the scientific character of the work that led the author to examine with equal indifference both the virtuous and the wicked prince, and offer to either the counsels suited to the achievement of his end.] These counsels are the outcome of earnest study of actual events, of ancient and modern history, without any reference to moral considerations. The *case of conscience* that is so unavoidably present to our own minds, never seems to occur to that of Machiavelli, who is solely concerned in inquiring which is the road to power, how the State is to be established? He never puts himself the question: whether the excessive immorality of the means employed, may not, even while momentarily grasping the desired end, destroy the very foundations of society, and in the long run render every good and strong government an impossibility. He forgets to inquire whether, just as there is a private morality, there may not be also a social and political morality, imposing certain inviolable limits, and furnishing rules for the statesman's conduct, which, although varying with the times and different social conditions, are yet equally subject to righteous principles. This is the weak and fallacious side of his doctrine; that which disgusts us with its author, arouses our horror, and has been a perennial source of accusation and calumny.

But when, on completing his analysis, his cruel labour of vivisection, Machiavelli proceeds to draw his con-

clusions, then at last the practical side and real aim of his work are clearly to be seen. It is a question of achieving the unity of his Italian motherland and of delivering it from foreign rule. This was certainly the holiest of objects ; but Machiavelli well knew that in the conditions in which Italy and Europe were then involved it would be impossible to achieve that object without recurring to the immoral means practised by the statesmen of the time. Pursued by this idea, and dominated by his theme, Machiavelli did not pause to disentangle the scientific, general and permanent aim of his book from the practical aim and transitory means, apparently and, it may be, really essential to its achievement at that moment. It is needful, he said in conclusion, to dare all things, and in view of the grandeur and sacredness of the end, to yield to no scruples. Solely by the formation of an united, powerful and independent nation can Italy acquire liberty, virtue, and true morality. This is an enterprise only to be undertaken by a Prince-reformer, and by the means suggested and imposed by history and experience. The people must afterwards complete and consolidate it by liberty, by national arms, by public and private virtue. x

It is this second idea that forms the special theme of the *Discourses*. They start from the same conception as that of the *Prince* : some one man must be the founder of the State, and go forward relentlessly to his end. They then proceed to show how the people should possess itself of the government, render it strong and prosperous, and administer it by means of fr

tions and morality. And here, with an inexhaustible fund of just, profound, and practical observations, the author lays the basis of a new science of statesmanship. We must, however, confine ourselves to remarking that the whole literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries contains no other pages in any way comparable to those of the *Discourses* in praise of the love of liberty, patriotic devotion and the sacrifice of every private interest to the public good. For there, as in the exhortation at the end of the *Prince*, Machiavelli's patriotism is vented with an eloquence that borders upon sublimity. At such moments his character gains elevation in our eyes, his figure assumes heroic proportions, and still more so when we remember that this patriotism not only inspired his intellect, but guided the conduct of his entire life.

To have freedom the people must also have strength, and therefore Machiavelli was led to write his *Art of War*. And this work shows us how, during the Pisan war, and throughout his various travels, he must have devoted much inquiry to the organization of foreign armies, for the sole purpose of discovering a means of regenerating the Italian arms, and was thus enabled to arrive at thoroughly original conclusions. For these studies not only led to the conception of his *Ordinanza*, of the armed nation, but likewise caused him to recognize and proclaim that the genuine strength of armies, as of nations, consists in virtue. Without virtue, he concluded, a people can be neither strong nor free; can never accomplish anything great. The training of

Italians to arms, to constant readiness to give their lives and their all to their country, can alone constitute the real beginning of their regeneration. And where, we may once more repeat, are other writings to be found extolling virtue with the heat or earnestness so nobly and eloquently poured forth in the *Art of War*?

Nor were these praises mere empty rhetoric. The best years of Machiavelli's life, his whole stock of energy and persistent, irrepressible activity, were dedicated to realizing the ideas expounded in this work. It is impossible not to grant him our admiration when we find him preaching the necessity of arming the people, training it to self-sacrifice for its country's cause, and ceaselessly endeavouring to impress Soderini and the Republic of Florence with the same conviction. Nor did he content himself with this alone. We find him in his days of misfortune and persecution at the hands of the Medici, recommencing the same propaganda among the youthful band of the Oricellarii Gardens. Again later, when of advanced age and shaken health, we see him, forgetful of himself and his own private interests, endeavouring to convert even Clement VII. to his ideas. And his promptitude in offering to be the first initiator of the noble attempt at the terrible time when the hosts of Charles V. were already advancing to overwhelm Italy in ruin, actually infused a momentary spark of enthusiasm into the Pope's uncertain soul. We are then forced to acknowledge that Machiavelli had at least one great and heroic passion which redeemed him, elevated him and raised him above

all his contemporaries : an ardent and irresistible love for liberty, his country, and even for virtue. And in remembering this, the brows of him who has been so persistently stigmatized as the incarnation of evil and of moral darkness, are suddenly wreathed with a divine splendour that glorifies the age.

This, then, was the process followed by Machiavelli's mind throughout his various works. Taking them one by one, their unity fails to strike us, their aim is lost sight of, and they give occasion for the strangest misinterpretations and calumnies. Taken as a whole, we not only comprehend their value, but discern the path pursued by the national idea,—which was then the idea of the age—personified in the great Florentine, in order to escape from the labyrinth of contradictions in which it was involved.

Italy had become incapable of a religious reformation like that accomplished in Germany. Instead of springing towards God, as Savonarola had predicted ; instead of seeking strength in a new conception of faith, she aimed at a re-composition of the idea of the State and the motherland. She saw in the sacrifice of all to the universal good the only possible way of political and moral redemption. The unity of the regenerated country would have inevitably led to the re-establishment of morality, would have re-kindled faith in public and private virtue, and discovered a method of sanctifying the purpose of life. This idea, vaguely and feebly felt by many, was the ruling thought of Machiavelli, the shrine upon which he offered up his entire existence. His

dying eyes beheld the spectacle of Italy's ruin. Afterwards his great thought remained a dream, and he was therefore the least understood and most calumniated personality that history has known.

At the present day, when Italy's political redemption has begun, and the nation is constituted according to the prophecies of Machiavelli, the moment has at last come for justice to be done to him.

FINIS.





